WINGED SEEDS

BERTHA OPPENHEIM

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WINGED SEEDS

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TORONTO

East Drive in November.

WINGED SEEDS

BY

BERTHA OPPENHEIM

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FOREWORD

EVERYONE who would understand farm life spiritually and socially, as well as somewhat technically, will enjoy "Winged Seeds."

The sweep, almost epic, with which the city doctor and his wife through vision, science, pluck, and sheer love of the life, achieved a country home, developed a successful agricultural enterprise, and added joy to a rural community, will delight those who farm either actually or in dreams.

Merely a segment of the career of two co-operating personalities of extraordinary interest and attractiveness, the portrayal leaves an eagerness for more about them—a healthful close of a narrative.

Not only that farming itself, but particularly the Green Mountain State on the shores of Lake Champlain, should find an interpreter with knowledge, sympathy, and a gift of expression, is cause for rejoicing.

May there be carried on every wind the good cheer of "Winged Seeds."

FRANK S. HACKETT.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Beginnings	1
II	Building	10
III	Playtime	23
IV	Interludes	33
V	Plans and Dreams	45
VI	Joys and Problems	56
VII	Granite Walls and Romance	66
VIII	A Unique Christmas and Embryo Farming	76
IX	At the Farm at Last	89
X	Apprenticeship, Artesian Wells and Many Other Things	102
XI	Adventures in Cloud and Rain, under Sun and Moon	115
XII	A New Year's Visit to the Farm and Neighbors	130
XIII	Farm Happenings and Stone House Guests	141
XIV	Lame Ducks, Orchard Grass and Races	156
XV	"Many Inventions"	169
XVI	The Rose Garden, Holstein-Friesian Cattle and Controversial Motors	181

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVII	Winter Days of Leisure, the Adventure of Poltron and the South Farm	192
XVIII	More Building, More Problems, More Joys, Pruning Apple Trees . . .	205
XIX	Community Ideals, the Race Track, Farming in Downright Earnest . .	215
XX	Wings Are Full-Grown on the Seeds of Dreams	230

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

East Drive in November . . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

Sunrise in the Pines 9

The Long House 21

When Spring Comes to Lewis Creek and the Ancient Willow 64

Frozen Spindrift 131

Larkspurs and Moonflowers 189

Draft Mare with Colt One Day Old 209

Looking Northwest from the Balustrade at Sunset . 241

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CHAPTER ONE

BEGINNINGS

THIS is the story of a farm, of how it came into being, and of its development.

It began in a studio, of all places. One windy night, the Doctor and I went to dine with our friends, Walter Appleton Clark and Nancy in their studio home. I remember we traveled up into prosaic Harlem and got off the no less prosaic Elevated at 104th Street. All the neighborhood seemed redolent of happier, more prosperous times. We opened a sagging paling gate, and walked through a decrepit yard that had once been a garden. We went through a long, narrow alleyway, and there we were. From the outside, it looked what in all probability it had been, a stable. But the door opened; we were welcomed joyfully by Walter and Nancy, and ushered into the great, raftered, dimly-lit, quaint place.

The studio-living-room must have been at least eighty feet long and almost as wide. Unlit places yawned ahead of us, like caverns. Most of it was

in darkness. Things jumped out at you here and there, as you grew accustomed to the bright pools of light near candles or lamp and the black pools of darkness elsewhere. A low couch with many cushions extended all along one side. There were oases of armchairs scattered about, with little tables and lights. There were old hangings on the walls, a model stand, several easels with unfinished pictures; sketches, with their faces turned to the wall, stood everywhere. Off this big room was a tiny one, used as a dining room.

Walter and Nancy were newly married. They were still bemoaning wedding gifts that had to be displayed for the sake of loving relatives who expected to see them in use. Walter said he wished he could "murder his various aunts with their ornate clocks and mermaids and dancing girls."

Dinner was announced, and an appetizing-looking joint of spring lamb appeared, dressed in its inevitable bunch of mint. We drew our chairs to the table expectantly.

There was no carving knife. We searched gayly through drawers of unfinished sketches, broken antiques, color tubes, India ink and what not, overturning brass candelabra, spilling candle grease, cluttering up remorselessly the already cluttered studio. At last the elusive tool was found. It had been used to scrape paint off a palette. We got our lamb with all the trimmings.

Walter had come across a sheaf of kodak pictures

of Lake Champlain in Vermont, taken years before on a sketching trip. "Show you the most beautiful place in the world, Doctor, if we ever get through this dinner." Gathering around the mellowest pool of light, made by a bronze student lamp, we drank our coffee and looked at the kodak prints. Right there began our dream. Right there were planted the seeds that so many years later grew wings.

They were pictures taken from a boat off the Westport shore, with the Adirondack mountains as a background. There were prints of old Vergennes on the Otter, with its picturesque falls, its stately elms and maples. There were views of Sleepy Otter Creek and Fort Cassin; views of old, gambrel-roofed farmhouses, nestling on wooded hills; views of tree-hung coves, and great, ancient rocks; views of rugged shore lines and still pools; pictures of wind-tossed trees on strange-shaped islands. Always there was the wondrous background of a great lake, of misty hills, and green valleys.

Before bed time we decided that Vermont, on Lake Champlain was the place of all places for our summer vacation. We must get a tent and camp in sight of all that loveliness. In this wise the farm began, little as we dreamed it at the time.

When May grew warm and we grew tired, the thought of apple blossoms around old farmhouses, the singing of birds in swaying trees, helped us to bear the noise and smells and daily grind of life in town. Those were young days of hard beginnings

and we could not leave until August. How we longed for the smell of the wind from out the Adirondack pine woods! How we ached for the sight, the feel, the sparkle of Lake Champlain! Even the longest waiting ends at last. August came. New York was stifling. Too tired to be gay, we saw our precious tent, our folding and dove-tailed aids to camp living and cooking, safely aboard the Albany night boat.

We were off at last! The air on the crowded boat was maddening. The very stars in the heavens glittered hotly. But we were on the way; what matter discomfort more or less? From Troy, ancient of name, modern in ugliness, we took the train for Westport, where a little puffing steamer ferry crossed the lake to Basin Harbour Landing, our objective point. The name of the boat, curiously enough, was the *Victor,* her pilot and owner was old Captain Daniels of Vergennes. We were on the lake, we saw the mountains, we smelt the wind. New York with its grind, its clamor, its deadly heat seemed like a bad dream. That March night, in Walter's studio was the bridge over which we had passed into another life.

Before long we were dumped on a rock-built, tumble-down dock, bag and baggage. Dumped, I say, literally. But dumped into a golden, glowing sunset, with no sound but the water, the wind in the pines, and cowbells far away. The busy-sounding little steamer drew away, out into the lake on its

way through Otter Creek to Vergennes. No one seemed interested in us or in our belongings. A bare-legged boy sat fishing at the dock's edge. A farmer went past, driving his cows ahead of him. A collie dog snuffed around us in friendly fashion. Truly, here was solitude, peace, absence of all turmoil. However, we were much too tired and hungry to go into ecstasy over landscape or sunset. What we wanted was something to eat, and a place to sleep.

A few rods beyond and back from the dock was the old, pre-Revolutionary stone house we remembered having seen on one of the kodak views. From its chimney issued smoke. While I stayed to watch our belongings, the Doctor walked up to the door. He was greeted with old-time hospitality by Mrs. Winans and asked to stay the night. "Bring your wife, Doctor." Somehow, his profession was always recognized. There was something about his expression, about his sensitive hands, that people felt and recognized immediately. Once, before our marriage, he was answering a call at night, in a very tough neighborhood. Two men held him up. Suddenly, the weirdest-appearing of the two looked at him, saying: "Aw, we do' want t' hurt yer none, Doc'." And they went with him to his destination for protection.

"Who'll watch our tent?" I asked Mrs. Winans. "Oh, never mind, no one'll tech yer things." They remained on that dock all night and were not mo-

lested. Such a supper as we ate! Such deep, dreamless sleep! Ah, we were young. Our life lay before us.

Before noon the following day, we had permission to set up our camp in a beautiful cove on the Winans farm. A cove protected by over-hanging cedar branches—its outlook toward the setting sun and the glory of the Adirondack hills. We had hired a boat, and made arrangements for milk and cream, butter and eggs. We had been told the most likely fishing places. We set up our primitive housekeeping. Nothing but the canvas of our tent was between us and the glories of the sun and the sky during the hours of light. We had only to open our tent flap and all the beauty of the night and the stars was ours. The blessed silence, the blessed solitude of the lake and the hills was ours. Walter was right. It was the most beautiful place in the world.

Time passed all too swiftly. We had busy days full of wholesome toil, splendid exercise, and purest joy. We got acquainted all over again. Neither one of us had realized our passionate love of the outdoors. The vivid beauty of all the life about us filled our cup of content to over-flowing. We both remembered old longings, sternly repressed. City life, and creating a medical practice is a soul- and body-absorbing occupation. What a lucky, lucky night it had been at Walter Clark's!

One evening, in late August, filled with insect

sound and falling stars, we had a huge fire of fat pine and hemlock. By that fire we dreamed dreams. The winter before, the Doctor had written his first book, "The Development of the Child." On its success depended much. In our joy of the open, everything splendid seemed possible.

"How would you like to take an option on some land on the lake shore?" My heart skipped a beat. "Suppose we look around to-morrow." Was there ever anyone who could think of so many thrilling possibilities? There was never a time when he could not keep one's so-called mind on the jump, trying to keep pace with his.

I think I was dreaming of owning a cow and a horse and chickens and all sorts of delightful things when the Doctor awakened me for our swim, with which we began our day. The day was young as were we. The newly-risen sun and the sky made sparkly pictures on the water, with evergreen shadows and misty hills for background.

We found Jim Winans in the barn, milking his cows. They were grades, part Guernsey, part Ayrshire. But we did not know it then—they were just plain cows to us both. The barn was rather smelly, and, I fear, very messy. This was before the time of big, co-operative milk plants, County Agricultural Agents, and scientific supervision of farms. To the Doctor's questions about land, Jim said: "Ask Will Kimball. His farm's right nex' t' ourn. He's got some lake shore guess he's aimin' t' git rid of."

So we fared on to Will Kimball's, and came to a big, run-down farm, owned by Kimball and his mother, a widow. "Yes, he'd some land, but ther' wuz a woman fr'm N' York hed kin' a spoke fer it."

Immediately that piece of land grew in desirability. We looked at each other with sparkling eyes. I dared say nothing. When the Doctor and I went on treasure-hunting expeditions to antique shops, he invariably cautioned me beforehand not to show my admiration either in words or by looks, for I had an unfortunate way of making the price go up. I remembered, and did not make a sound. Will Kimball walked over to the lake shore with us, and showed us the six or eight acres of virgin wood land bordering the lake, "he aimed t' git rid of."

Saints in Heaven! Was there ever anything so absolutely beautiful! Old oaks and maples, pines, hemlocks, white birches, gray poplars, shagbarks, and cedars, hundreds and hundreds of them; great mossy rocks, a sandy beach sheltered from the north—all this had a view toward the west and ranges and ranges of Adirondack hills. Back of the woods, toward the south, was a partially cleared meadow. "For a garden," sang my heart. And beyond lay the peaceful, fertile Green Mountain valley. We made the bargain then and there without in the least knowing how we were going to pay for the land. How I pitied "the woman who hed kin' a wanted it." It was ours. It was ours! We owned a piece of God's beautiful earth. Those

Sunrise in the Pines.

were our oaks, our maples, our rocks; that was our shore!

When night fell, our tent would not hold us. We slept on our land, on pine boughs, wrapped in blankets, under the vaulted sky, with the whippoorwills calling to the water, and the trees whispering to the stars. I say, we slept. Sheer happiness would not let us sleep. We talked and planned most of the night, and listened to the strange rustling and whispering and murmuring all about us.

It seemed as if we had barely closed our eyes, when an inquisitive chipmunk awoke us. Low bird calls greeted the loveliest dawn we had ever seen, pale iris and silvery gold, with wreathing, gauzy mist over all the dew-drenched world. What delightful thing had happened? Oh, yes, the sun was rising on our land. And with the sunrise came soberness. What we had now to do was to get back to town and work; work and economize. This land had to be paid for and a bungalow had to be built. Dreams would not do it, nor happy nights of sleeplessness.

CHAPTER TWO

BUILDING

OFFICE hours began to be a busy time for us. The Doctor's compelling, magnetic personality, his untiring, selfless devotion to all alike, his great love for his chosen work were beginning to tell at last. God was good to us, and the book arrived. While it brought little in the way of financial returns, it brought undreamed-of results in the way of our medical practice. People who counted began to see the genius of the pioneer in the Doctor's work. Universities became interested. Heads of their physiology, psychology, and philosophy departments recognized his work. One snowy evening, Nicholas Murray Butler, then Professor of Psychology and Philosophy at Columbia University, and George Rice Carpenter, of the Department of English and Literature, came to see what manner of man was this Doctor, who wrote in scholarly language of medicine and psychology, of child study and development. This interview was the beginning of a life-long friendship with both Dr. Butler and Professor Carpenter.

The evening seemed long to me, who waited alone. At last, it was no longer evening but night,

I heard the welcome sound of closing doors, and the Doctor's step coming upstairs. "Let's celebrate. To-night is a turning point in our lives." He went on to tell me what had happened and had been talked about in his office that night. We had some music. I often wondered what our neighbors thought about our late hours of playing and singing. Long after all righteous mortals should have been asleep, we went out into the snow-filled, star-lit night. We walked down to Burns on Sixth Avenue and were very gay over our oysters and celery and Pilsner. The Doctor dared me to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge to finish the night, but at that I balked, thinking of the morning.

This recognition only spurred us on to renewed effort, to harder work. We actually were able to meet one payment after the other on our land. "Now it's paid up to the big white pine, you remember. Now to the scarlet oak." By another spring, the land was ours, paid for, every square inch of it. All that long, busy winter we lived and worked with a background of woods, hills, lake shore, garden, and, wonder of wonders, a house. We had the temerity to draw plans on paper. We knew exactly how it would look; at least, the Doctor knew. All his minute explanations did nothing but give me a hazy idea of a long, wide porch, a big shadowy living room with a stone fireplace. The thing that interested me most was the fireplace. A fire of logs and a garden! I could not grasp anything more.

You see, I had little imagination. The vision was his, the work was his, the accomplishment was his. Mine was but the detail of trying to make a bit smooth the rough places in his path.

"The Long House" we named it, before it was born, like a much-desired and long looked-for child, "The Long House" in memory of the Six Nations of Iroquois who once roamed and hunted over all this lake shore. In their councils they spoke of themselves as "We of the Long House." We pored over seed catalogues, subscribed to the *Garden Magazine*. We managed to get away by the end of a fearful July. This time the trip by water seemed too long. We took the midnight train from Grand Central Terminal, arriving at Vergennes by noon of the following day. We had written to the Winans, and were met at the station with a team that looked as if it had all the world's burdens on its thin shoulders.

The drive from Vergennes to the lake at Basin Harbour is over about eight miles of very bad clay road, bad underfoot, but very lovely overhead and all about. We drove through beautiful, woodsy lanes, full of green trees and singing birds, over old covered bridges, with signs, "Walk your Horses." As if that tired-out work team and most of the others we met, could possibly have done anything but walk. And always the sleepy Otter meandered peacefully through the sunny landscape; always the fertile, wide Addison Valley lay before us, sloping

down to the lake; always we were in sight of deep blue hills.

We got settled in the old Winans house, which was as uncomfortable inside as it was picturesque when seen from without. Built of great blocks of gray granite, with ampelopsis trailing over it, it just melted into the gray-green of the trees and rocks. The windows were small, built for protection against Indians and cold winters. Ceilings were low for the same reason, and the rooms were always dusky, even on the most brilliant days of sun. We were soon thoroughly at home and very happy. The Doctor endeared himself to everyone. We had barely arrived when the hired man cut his foot with a dull axe, that worst of all cuts. Naturally, the Doctor took care of it. A physician is such an asset.

We set up our tent, which we had left on the Winans place over the winter, on our own lake shore. And then began a busy time. I got dinner for us two and for the man we had hired to help us. In this way we could spend all the long summer days on our land. In those times a hired man received for a ten-hour day one dollar and found, which meant his board and keep. We let Jordan sleep in the tent. And so our building began. We started by clearing away dead and fallen trees and brush in what seemed to us the most desirable place for our house, the highest point of our eight acres.

Will Jordan was a character. There were few

country things which he had not tried at some time in his life. Farm work, fishing, icing, lumbering, guiding, carpenter and mason work. All these he had tried, and always with special stress laid on drinking. This last was his undoing. He was uncouth, not over clean, ragged, with the story of drink written large in his face. Yet he had the eyes of a dreamer; bright blue eyes, deep set in his furrowed, tanned face. He had a strange gentleness and love for animals, and showed surprising courtesy toward me. He knew the woods like a wild thing, and, most astonishing of all, he could quote poetry and knew the Psalms.

When it rained, we stopped chopping and clearing and went fishing. We were drenched to the skin, of course, but that was part of the game. We were young. On rainy days, too, neighbors came to see what the "Doc fr'm th' city an' his Missus were up to." We enjoyed those friendly talks and frank questions quite as much as any of our callers. And soon we found they had adopted us. Gifts came in the form of doughnuts, early apples, jellies, and more goodies. In exchange, the Doctor played to them. He had brought his cello, and I sang. People of the lonely places do love a fiddle; cello or violin, it is all the same to them.

August and our playtime was nearing its end. We decided to stay on a few days longer; there was still so much left to do. We had gotten out cedar

posts enough to make a start. We started with the porch. When the holes were dug and the posts set, we felt almost as if the house were in place. Meanwhile a man from Essex, across the lake, one Burnham, a carpenter and builder, had come to see us in regard to our house plans. I believe he thought us crazy when we told him our ideas for our home, and showed him the plans the Doctor had drawn. Our later knowledge of northern Vermont and the lake climate and general conditions, taught us that Burnham was in a measure justified. However, we made the contract for the Long House, at what would to-day seem a ridiculously low price. It was to be built of clapboards and shingles, cedar posts with the bark on for trimming and for general use. It turned out to be a most picturesque and livable house, in which we spent six happy summers.

The house was planned to consist mainly of a great central living room, forty by fifty, roughly raftered, two stories high, with the west end curtained off for a dining room. There was to be a stone fireplace at the east end. This fireplace the Doctor meant to help build with his own hands. At the west end of the living room, at the side of the dining room were to be two stairways leading up to a sort of mezzanine gallery which was to run all around the room, except at the fireplace end. Off this gallery would be the bedrooms. It would all be simple and attractive. The clap-boards were to be stained moss

green like the shadows that filtered in from the sunshine in the surrounding trees. It would truly be a glorified living in the woods.

Later, when we could afford to remain until the end of September, we found that this Italian, southern style of building was indeed attractive, but not warm. Dancing firelight and leaping shadows are romantic, but shivery when the nights are crisp.

There was to be a kitchen beyond the dining room, with a wood-burning stove, and, eventually, we hoped, running water fed by a windmill. The kitchen cupboards were to have doors both sides, with the drawers opening both ways, wonderfully convenient. There was to be a bathroom, luxury of luxuries, on the lake in those days.

Before leaving, we arranged with Jordan to plough a piece of the cleared meadow land for our garden, to plant the garden in the spring and to look after it until our arrival, and also to prune two old apple trees we had discovered in our meadow.

And then we folded our tent and went back to another winter of endeavor. It was an inspiring thing to work with so splendid a goal always before one. It made the thousand cares and burdens of a steadily growing practice with its attendant community, educational, and hospital work easier to bear. It made difficult things worth while, many times over.

In February, Burnham began with the building

of our house. By the end of June it was ready to be lived in. When we made our first payment for lumber, nails, and so on, we received in return with our receipts a pail of delicious maple sugar from Burnham. We seemed always to meet a little touch of human friendliness and good will. The Doctor had a wand of magic. He brought out humanness in the most unlikely persons. At times, I think, next to his passion for healing and his love of beauty, came this eternal desire to bring out the good which, he insisted is in every human soul, "if only it can be touched."

Burnham wrote: "Your house is pretty as a picture, but I'd not want to live in it."

Everything we could scrape together went into simple furnishings for the Long House. Cots, kitchen tables, spindle chairs, all were to be stained moss green and leaf brown, after they were in place. Those days we took linen, china, bedding, and more back and forth with us. Meanwhile family and friends presented us with brass candlesticks and bowls, green and brown pottery, cushions, flags, and other delightful things for decorative purposes. In late April I sent the garden seeds up to Jordan. By the middle of May he planted them and wrote weirdly-spelled and very amusing letters anent all things at the lake. Invariably he began with the weather. "A fine rain, a late frost, a good thaw, bright sunshine." Years later we came to realize what a rôle of tremendous importance weather plays

in the country dwellers' life; a thing of hope and fear, always to be reckoned with, never to be counted on.

Then the Doctor got an attack of appendicitis, and June found him at the hospital and very ill. From his sick bed we got ourselves, our maids, our dog and cat, and all the rest of our belongings off for Vermont. We were fearfully excited. Think of going up to the lake, to live on our land in our own, paid-for new house! We arrived in a pouring rain, bag and baggage; and the first thing we did was to put the Doctor to bed in a hastily unpacked cot and mattress. Fortunately, I had sent up our freight several weeks before this. Porch, living room, every available and unavailable place was filled with shavings, boxes, barrels, bales, and what not, piled every which way. But there we were, in our wonderful house, with things to eat, with a fire in the kitchen stove, which Jordan had been ordered to set up against our arrival, with a place to sleep.

The house was even more attractive than we had hoped. Nora, our faithful maid, and her young niece, whom we had brought with us, were perfectly happy. They said the woodstove and the smoke in the kitchen, and having no water in the house, but lots outdoors, and trees and everything so green, reminded them of home in Ireland. The Winans and the Kimballs and other kindly neighbors had sent in every imaginable thing from split stove wood to

apple pies and cream, and came to offer help, having heard of the Doctor's illness.

To get order out of this chaos, was unending fun. Of course, we stopped to go fishing, for a swim, to call on the neighbors, to watch milking when we went for supplies, to have picnics. After all, this was our playtime, our family of six, counting the dog and cat, were in love with life, and life to be real cannot always be lived on schedule, and should not. It was part of the Doctor's creed: "Take time to see beautiful things, take time to ask questions. Stop and have your moment of joy. What matters a late and less perfect meal? What matter curtains hung a day later?"

Each day saw something accomplished. Jordan was here, there, everywhere; unpacking barrels, setting up beds, bringing in splendid fish, cleaning out a chimney that smoked, as only a new chimney can. Somehow, no one of us felt that all this was hard work. It seemed like a long-continued picnic, although no door closed, no drawer would push out, although squirrels and mice had made nests in every place they should not have been. The Doctor began to get his strength back miraculously. The second week, we got a mason, hunted up stone on the place, and Kimball drew it for us. Then the fireplace was built, roughly put together, roughly cemented. We had the village blacksmith make a crane. The kettle was an heirloom, put away in our New York store-room for years. It took just

one week of hard work, and made a dreadful mess in the living room.

By that time the maids and I had stained cots, tables, chairs, had made the curtains and hangings, all soft browns and greens and reds of the simplest and most inexpensive materials. Flags hung over the gallery railing, cedar branches, grasses, and cat-tails stood about in brass bowls and in pottery vases. On the big, soft-wood, green-stained center table were lamps and books and magazines. Tall-backed spindle chairs were drawn close. There were cots disguised as couches, fishing rods and guns, hickory rockers, and little stands with smoking material, and more books and magazines. Things altogether began to wear a look of having been lived with, to acquire a feel of home, as if it had been home for years and years. Casement windows, really doors, opened on the long, wide porch, which extended the entire length of the house. It was named the Long House for more reasons than one. Everywhere was the outlook into sun-flecked green trees, toward the sparkling waters of the lake, with the wooded, misty hills beyond. The beauty of the sun rising over newly-wakened woods, the joy of ever-changing, vivid sunsets, and the golden after-glow on the Adirondack hills, the peace of quiet moonlight creeping from tree to tree, turning the iron night to molten silver—all these wondrous things were ours.

The day we picked our first peas, we were ready

Long House Porch.

The Long House.

to make our first fire. The Doctor was brown and had regained his appetite. We asked the neighbors to come in. It was in the midst of haying, and very hot, but we hoped against hope for rain or a storm to give reason and tone to our sacred first fire rite. As usual, we were in luck. In the afternoon, a thunderstorm came up with a big gale from the north. The lake was lashed into mountains of waves. Our stage was set most dramatically. We all helped to bring in dry kindling, to drag up big chunks. How we did enjoy the laying of that fire! There is something of the savage in us all.

Evening came. It was cool. Our guests arrived. They said they had never seen so cosy a place, as we gathered around our stone fireplace. Mine was the joy of shaving a curled stick and starting the fire. Up curled the tiny flame watched by us all in awed silence. In two minutes great tongues of flame went roaring up the chimney. The Doctor started to sing "America." We all stood and sang, and cheered everything from our country to the fire. Until midnight we told tales and ate ice cream and drank cider; a fearsome combination, but no one seemed the worse for it next day. The north wind most obligingly howled a fitting accompaniment. Thus was the Long House consecrated.

All through August, Jordan and the Doctor worked hard. They finished the cedar porch railing and made rustic chairs and tables of cedar. Then they began clearing our woods. Nora, Delia,

and I tended the vegetable garden and a few old-fashioned flowers Jordan had planted as a surprise for me. With tears in his eyes, he said: "Thet pipe an' terbaccer y' sent me Christmas wuz th' fust present I got sence I wuz a kid, afore mother went." For this he had given the flowers.

CHAPTER THREE

PLAYTIME

THE Doctor's practice obliged him to buy a pair of horses. From his earliest boyhood he had loved horses, and had possessed the magic touch that brought their affection and control.

New Year's night came. It was a night of joy for us always. We usually elected to spend it together and alone. We called it our wedding night, although we had been married in June. More often than not, the Doctor barely managed to be back by midnight. Our jolly, indigestible chafing-dish suppers lasted until a gray winter dawn filtered in through the closely-drawn curtains. They were nights of retrospect, nights of dreams. On that particular New Year's night, we decided to make the trip to the Long House a driving trip. To drive in leisurely fashion through the lovely Hudson valley, past Albany, through historic Bennington and beautiful Manchester, over the Green Mountain Trail to Rutland. Then we planned to drive on to quaint, old Middlebury, with its interesting little college, to our own Vergennes, to the lake and home.

Looking for just the right type of Surrey at the right price was endless fun. We left the hot city,

as we had planned, by the middle of June. We expected to spend the nights at hotels or inns, but to stop in woodsy places and by running brooks for al fresco luncheons. My mother gave us a delightful English tea and luncheon basket. So, with our suitcases, and with our black spaniel, Scotty, the Doctor's shadow, we drove off into the glory of an early summer day. It was in the time of singing, mating birds, in the time of freshest green, when leaves are young and new, when fields are sweet with wild flowers, when all the world seems dowered with youth and happiness. Everywhere green things were sprouting. Over it all hung the smell of roses and honeysuckle.

When we arrived at the Long House, after four wholesome days of gypsying, we found everything in delightful order, a growing garden, a well-filled ice shed, an actually turning windmill, and neighbors and maids happy to greet us. We turned our tired horses out into Will Kimball's big pasture. There we found two baby colts foaled in May. When we saw the little colts grazing beside their mothers, in that beautiful, hill-enclosed pasture, with its outlook over the Green Mountains, we looked at each other, the same thought in both our minds. Some day, somehow, we too must have a big, green pasture, with cows and calves, and mother mares with suckling baby colts. . . .

The first thing we did, was to get two carpenters from Vergennes. They, together with Jordan and

the Doctor, soon put up a simple horse barn at the farther end of our meadow. Next, a floating barrel dock came into existence in our sheltered cove. The dock was made of plank put together and attached to casks floating in the water beneath, one that could be taken apart and out of the water before our return to New York. Meanwhile we had bought a tiny steam launch run by a kerosene motor engine. We re-named her the *Otter*. There were a goodly number of delayed meals while the Doctor got acquainted with the intricacies and the vagaries of her motor.

At last we were ready to share our joys of the Long House and the beauty of our lake and our hills with family and friends in real earnest. While we had had occasional visitors from the very earliest days on our place, we now had a houseful all through the happy summers. They could swim and row, fish and tramp, and do all the happy outdoor things so dear to those who understand. No one was happier to be with us than my young brother Marion, whom the Doctor had adopted as his. The Long House was never the same without his infectious gaiety, his unfailing willingness to help, his youthful breaks.

We remained until the middle of September. What gay, busy days they were! Some of us had to sleep in the living room, in tents, in hammocks even. All this unconventionality and the simplicity of our life made for happiness and content. Our

garden was a great success. So were the dock and the launch. All summer we had the never-ending pageant of amber and gold, and opal and green sunsets, of silver-white moonlight, of sparkling, myriad stars, and with it and over it all were cooling winds, bird songs, rustling, sun-drenched trees. We could always get fish, splendid bass, and pike, and pickerel, bull pout, and perch. We knew where delicious wild raspberries and black caps grew. Altogether we led the most delightful, restful, health-giving life imaginable.

Many amusing things happened. We were in the habit, for instance, of buying our chickens alive, and killing them ourselves. Incidentally, the natives were growing sophisticated as to their charges, despite our friendly intercourse. They evidently believed that business and friendship have nothing in common. They cheerfully charged city prices for their produce. To-day, knowing the farmers' problems at first hand, I believe they were absolutely justified in so doing. Early one Sunday morning, when we had quite a house party, I awoke to a great squawking and general uproar. Our chickens had escaped out of their coop, and were having a happy time wandering about, and digging for insects. Most of our household, in various sketchy costumes, joined in the futile chase amid gales of laughter. Finally the Doctor decided to make game birds of those poor domestic fowls, and shot them one by one. We enjoyed eating them fully

as much as if they had been killed in the more commonplace way.

Another time we watched a neighboring farmer, Fleming by name, and his hired man, both in their Sunday clothes, trying to get a hog out of his pen and into a crate for market. It was the proverbial pig pen, deep in mud. Also it had rained during the morning. The hog weighed four hundred pounds or thereabout. The two men ran round and round that muddy pen, and with them, always just out of reach, the poor, frightened beast. We sat on the fence, the Doctor and I, helpless with laughter. Meanwhile the men, getting dirtier by the minute and more furious, cursed and swore: "Damn y', yer nothin' but a hog, annyways"—until the air was blue. The poor hog led them more than an hour's chase, before they got him, squealing dismally, into the crate and loaded. No doubt, it was a good bit more amusing to watch than to live through.

Still another day, we went to a decrepit-looking farmhouse in search of mahogany furniture. We were ushered into a dim, musty parlor. When our eyes got accustomed to the half-light, we saw most unusual and surprising pictures. Silver and brass coffin plates, surrounded with dried flowers and crape, hung carefully framed on the worn walls. There must have been at least a dozen, perhaps even more. Such cheerful things to live with! And when we left, we noticed that the horse block was

a gravestone, laid on end. We hardly wondered that the poor wife looked like a mummy, stringy hair, colorless skin, expressionless eyes. Yet she must have been attractive, before the monotony of her life left its devastating mark upon her. It was good to get back into the brilliant sunshine, into the tonic air, into vital things.

Ah, yes, those long-gone days were happy! There was just one fly that marred the beauty of our amber. This was the way of it. More farmers had followed Will Kimball's example, and "aimed t' git rid o' shore acres." A cottage settlement was growing up about us. There were a few families from Vergennes and the country towns near by, but mostly they were people from New York, Brooklyn, and still more distant cities. Rights of way seemed to be everywhere, particularly through our garden and past our porch. Our wonderful peace and solitude was broken in upon.

The Doctor was called days and nights also. He had no wish to practice during our vacation days, nor did he care to break into the work of the village physicians, yet he was always glad and ready to respond, especially at night. I resented the whole situation tremendously. Perhaps it was only human for families from the cities to prefer a city doctor, particularly one who came immediately, without question or charge. I say I resented it. Certainly I did not, when there was real and urgent need. But the fact remained that there were a

great many unnecessary demands upon the Doctor's time and strength, and he needed every moment of his vacation. The exactions of his ever-increasing practice, the educational community work to which he frequently sacrificed precious hours of sleep, gave him barely any leisure during our long winters in New York. There were times when he was summoned by urgent telegrams to see patients in New York or at their country places. Besides all this, he was deep in the writing of a book of medical science. Our own household of family, friends, and helpers respected most minutely his hours of work. The cottagers, or campers, as they were called, had no such scruples. He was called when some silly woman had a fit of nerves, when she thought that possibly one of her children had a spoiled stomach, or her cook had cut her finger, and more along the same lines. No one of his own household would have dreamed of disturbing him for anything of the sort.

At the end of the summer came a time when I "had a chance for glory and lost it," as the Doctor said. Shortly before we planned to go back to town, he was trimming some dry and dead cedars in our woods. In some unaccountable way, for he was quite a woodsman in the handling of his axe, he cut his right hand very badly. I heard his call in a strange-sounding voice. I ran out to him, and found him seated on a stump, holding his right hand with his left. "Get my emergency case, and

sterilize needles and the instruments I shall need. Bring hot water, bi-chloride solution, cotton and bandages, and then you may help me put in some stitches." I turned pale at the thought. Making the necessary preparations was one thing. To take stitches in the Doctor's own hand? I could not, and told him so. He looked at me as if he were ashamed. "Very well than, 'fraidcat, get David."

David Mannes, violinist, and his wife, the pianist, Clara Damrosch were old friends. They had a camp adjoining our woods. With them and their interesting little son, lived Clara's mother, who had been a singer in her early life. She was the widow of Dr. Leopold Damrosch, who founded the New York Symphony Orchestra and the Oratorio Society; who was the sponsor and interpreter of Wagner opera in America. Another beloved member of the Mannes household was Mrs. Damrosch's sister, Miss Von Heimburg, called by us all, Tante Marie. One of the charming, attractive women, who somehow are beyond marriage, yet who mother all their world, whose very essence is sweetness, motherliness, selflessness.

By the time David arrived, everything was ready for the operation. I threaded the catgut into the needle, the Doctor put it in place, and poor David, with his trembling, slender musician's fingers, pushed it through. After we had taken seven stitches in this wise, the deed was done. We all three looked like death, and felt fairly sick.

The only cheerful one was the patient himself. However, neither of the men refused a drink of Scotch. It was many weeks before the Doctor had even partial use of his right hand, although it healed perfectly in time. It was many months before he ceased reminding me of my lost chance for glory.

We saw more and more of the lake on our frequent launch sails, and fell each day more in love with its evergreen shores, with the fertile valleys beyond, and its lichened rocks, that are geologically so tremendously ancient. We loved its picturesque inlets and its beautiful islands, its interesting fauna and flora; and more than all this, we had awakened to the deep significance of its farms and its farming. We had become vitally interested in the farm operations going on all about us. Constantly we thought and we talked of the future. We wanted meadows and pastures and stock. We wanted to own and to develop a real farm. The very thought of so wonderful a thing, so pregnant a thing, thrilled us.

There were a number of factors contributing toward this end. All creative work the Long House and its surrounding acres permitted had been accomplished. There was little left to do, but to enjoy the outdoor life. This was no longer sufficient to satisfy either the Doctor or me. The many campers, the rights of way, and, in consequence, the growing lack of peace and quiet, all

these things were variously disturbing. They conspired to awaken a steadily increasing desire for more land, for more worlds to conquer. In the last analysis, this was a quite natural and human restlessness, both physical and mental.

We had learned how to play. What was infinitely more important, we had learned how to work. We had come to see the tremendous inspiration of tilling the soil, the joy, the peace, the fascination of farm life.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERLUDES

THE Long House and the woods about it rang with laughter and song that blue and gold July Fourth. We were celebrating Independence Day. The house was filled with young people, eager, joyous, ready for anything. There were all manner of things, from swimming matches and barrel races to giant firecrackers and rockets, with a porch dance at night and a big bonfire. We made gallons of ice cream and harmless lemonade punch, and what seemed like tons of sandwiches. Eventually we drove most of the girls and all the men out of the kitchen. They went off singing into the woods to cut branches for decoration.

By night, the big porch was gaily festooned with greens. There was sufficient space for the dance, as the porch was seventy-five feet long and fully twelve feet wide. Swaying Chinese lanterns hung from ceiling and from cedar posts. More colored lights were hung in windows and among the surrounding trees. There was a slender young moon. The summer sky was luminous with stars. The air was soft and still, a beautiful, joyous night, a night made for youth and romance. By dark, the coun-

tryside was assembled. David Mannes offered to play for us for the dance. No one less would possibly do. The Doctor, who danced as well as he did most other things, had promised to dance with the girls. They would not believe it, for no one of them imagined he would or could do anything quite so frivolous. Such dancing! Portland Fancy, Virginia Reel, Quadrilles and Lancers, good, old-fashioned waltzes and polkas, all these were danced with the abandon of real and rare pleasure.

It was a revelation to watch the wholesome fun and jollity, to see the marvelous disappearance of our sandwiches and other goodies. As foreground for the picture, we had the reflection of the big bonfire on the shore, and the many-colored rockets shooting up into the still air and falling, with a hissing fiery rain, into the waters of the lake.

Our big living room was shadow-filled and still. The more so with the sound of all the laughter and gaiety and music outdoors. With us, the Doctor and myself, by a smoldering hemlock fire sat one of our guests, who is to-day a very eminent authority in his chosen field. His childhood had been filled with many cares and few pleasures. His life at that time had not permitted much gaiety. More than all this, he had never known the real outdoors, the blessed open spaces. His growing love and admiration for trees and color, for the lake and for the hills was inarticulate, and doubly pathetic for that reason. Soft reflected light filtered

in through open casement windows. Lamps had not been lighted. A long silence fell. Suddenly,—"Do you know, my friends, until to-night I have never known what was meant by embers. 'To sit by the dying embers' after-glow.' It means home, the sacredness of life and love. I shall never forget these days with you. They have brought into my life beauty and understanding."

Outside also, there had come an amazing silence. David was tuning his violin. We could see his left hand on the strings of his beloved fiddle. His strongly-lined face was in shadow. Then he played folk songs, spirited, gay, sad. Underneath each quaint old melody, no matter what its key, was the same somber, haunting quality that is the deep-undercurrent of all folklore, spelling the tragedy, the futility of life. There was not a sound when he ended. A lantern flickered, went out. The water, murmured, the trees rustled. Fireflies were all about. Goodnights were spoken quietly. Our guests vanished into the shadowy woods. We went about putting out the remaining lights, and left the night to scented silence and shimmering stars.

It was a bumper hay crop, for there had been many snows in the winter, and much rain in June. The farmers had difficulty to get enough help to bring in their hay. There came a Saturday with promise of storm. The Doctor and our young people volunteered. They pitched hay all that hot, dull Saturday, and vowed they had never enjoyed

themselves so much in all their lives. I can vouch for their appetites; if this contributed anything to the enjoyment. After this first trial, they repeated the same work a number of times, and became quite expert at the game, or so they imagined. At any rate, it helped out our neighbors, and brought about much good feeling.

By the beginning of September our guests left us. We usually planned to have the two or three last weeks for our annual picnic, as we called it. We luxuriated in the thought of having all the days and the nights to ourselves. We went for long, over-night trips on the lake, taking with us our camping and fishing gear, our rifles, and our dog. A quick dip at dawn, with the sun coming up in all its glory of autumn color, was a joy. There was no one to watch us but our faithful spaniel. He sat on the deck of the launch, quivering with fear for our safety. Then came breakfast. How good it tasted in the wind and the sun! After dishes were dutifully washed, we hauled up our diminutive anchor, and started off somewhere, anywhere into the beauty of the sparkling day. Whenever we saw a valley that looked promising, we landed and investigated, always with "our farm" at the back of our mind. We saw a goodly number of wonderful places, all adapted for farming, more or less. So far, we had come across nothing that was for sale.

At the fall of early dusk, we anchored our launch

at the entrance to one of the marshes, found in innumerable places on the Vermont shore. Mostly they are the heads of sleepy streams, with low, soft outlines, with swamp maples and water willows overhanging their shores. The tang and the color of autumn had already come to these quiet backwaters, inhabited only by water fowl, loon, heron, wild duck. It was for this we had trailed our little tender and brought our rifles.

We poled our Peterborough into the tall reeds. How we loved the swish of the rushes against the side of our boat! Soon they closed over our heads, making a natural duck blind. We were one with the silence and the peace of the marsh, the gold and amethyst, the jade and amber of the sky. Neither the Doctor nor I cared greatly for the actual shooting. It was much more the charm and the poetry of the place and hour, that fascinated us. One evening I recall, we came pretty near being upset, when Scotty grew excited as a flock of teal flew fairly over us. The Doctor invariably carried something to read in his hunting clothes. "Watch out for my coat and that Sophocles!" It mattered little whether we got wet or mired; the book concerned him infinitely more. At the fall of night and through rising moonlight we sailed home to the Long House.

Then again, we went for long driving trips, with our luncheon basket, our hammocks, and always Scotty. We rarely knew where we would go, still

less, what we would do. There was in it the spirit of mystery, of exploration. We both adored it, this element of adventure, of uncertainty. And always at the back of everything, was the overwhelming desire for a farm, our farm, where we could work and grow things, which we could develop, and where we could create. We had come to feel that life in the country was the only life worth living. Some day, we would give up our medical work in New York, settle on our farm, breed horses, and grow apple trees, and do all the thousand thrilling, fascinating things possible on a farm. What wonderful books we would write in the snow-bound, silent winters! What wonderful music we would have! Oh, yes, of course we would have a Concert Grand piano, and a big pipe organ! By that time our dreaming became so excited that our horses went unheeded into the ditch by the roadside. A farmer ploughing in the field beyond stopped his team, leaned on his plough, and looked wonderingly at us. We came back to earth without mishap, and decided to drive instead of dream, seeing that we expected to get ourselves, Scotty, and our beasts home for the night.

Shortly after this drive of dreams, we had to consult a local surveyor, in regard to our boundary line, about which there had been some discussion. The neighbor in question, was "th' woman fr'm the city," mentioned by Will Kimball at the time of our buying of his lake shore. She had been de-

cidedly disappointed when she found someone had, so to speak, "beaten her to it." Although she had some beautiful acres and had built a charming camp, she resented, as only a woman can, our possession of land she had considered practically hers. The surveyor recommended to us was a very discursive, yet interesting old man, who had surveyed all the country roundabout, and knew everybody within many miles. He knew the lake shore, and he knew the inland valleys. Eventually, it was because of this boundary dispute that we sold the Long House, and came to find the land that was the first purchase for our farm. It happened in this wise.

After a fiery, gorgeous sunset, the wind started to blow, and before supper was over, the first equinoctial had struck us. It was splendid to see the wind-tossed, wildly swaying trees, to watch mighty rollers coming in, lashed by the big wind into huge fans of flying spray. The old surveyor stayed the night with us. Seated by our blazing fire, he related amusing and interesting things about the countryside, and its inhabitants. He told us about the Diamond Islands, two tiny islands three or four miles north of Basin Harbour. One is the property of Vermont, the second belongs to "York State." The native of Vermont never by any chance says New York. Now, our County of Addison has local option, and Vergennes voted dry. All this happened before Prohibition was written into our Constitution. Promptly an enterprising citizen put

up a shack on the New York Diamond Island and did a thriving business selling spirits, good, bad, and indifferent.

The old man remembered the Civil War. He had helped escaping slaves through our township to Canada. He told us of the Ferrisburgh Town Clerk, Rowland Robinson, who grew apples, made butter, and wrote splendid stories of local life. Years later, when we had located at Ferrisburgh, we came to know well the interesting Robinson family. They were of Quaker descent, people of culture and education.

We asked about land. He knew of some that he was sure we could get. It was the very thing we wanted, part virgin forest land, on the lake shore, part an old, run-down farm. Most of it had for years past been used only for pasture and woodlot. His eyes narrowed. He was a canny old man. I am sure he saw the possibility of doing a little business on his own account. We asked about the situation of this beautiful piece of land. He would "show us to-morrow, if the wind'd go down. We could go in the launch."

The fire had burned down to gray ash. It was past midnight when we went to bed. The Doctor and I were reminded of the night long ago, when we slept under the stars, and saw the sun rise for the first time on land we owned. Those days were past. The enthusiasm of youth had simmered down to deep, placid content. We knew the time

had come for the realization of our great dream. It made us quiet. Big things had to be done. Great responsibility had to be met. We slept. To-morrow would come, all in its good time. We had learned to wait.

The great wind blew itself to death by morning, and the sun rose on a radiant autumn day, with the air like wine, and everything glittery. The lake was rough, but we rather liked to feel that there was life in the waves beneath us. Directly breakfast was over, we started out, and sailed due north, past the Palisades, Westport, Rattlesnake Harbour, Split Rock Light on the west or New York shore. We sailed fairly close to the east, the Vermont shore. It was very beautiful, rugged, deeply indented, with lichened rocks, with white birches, gray poplars, and towering evergreens growing close to the water. We passed the Diamond Islands and then turned northeast, sailing into a splendid, deep, landlocked bay, Keeler's Bay, our map of the lake told us. We saw a quaint, old stone house on one side of the bay. The surveyor said this had once been an inn for soldiers, and was on the old Boston Post Road. It was now the property of a Catholic priest, Father Campeau, who rarely came there.

We circled in and out of picturesque inlets, then anchored our launch in a delightful, sheltered little harbor, with a sandy beach below great, wonderful shelving rocks. These rocks, filled with gas-

tropods and other ancient rock incrustations, made a natural dock. Scrambling up the slippery, mossy rocks, we found ourselves among splendid evergreens, in truly virgin woods. Trees, trees were all about us, dim, silvery, silent. We were very quiet, but I know our hearts were beating fast. Old Mr. Benton spoke: "Wait until you see the big oak. It's the biggest tree in this section. It stands alone in a clearing it has made for itself. Four men cannot span it. This used to be the old Graves' farm. They used all this land for cow pasture." A straggling cow path led us on. Ten minutes of rough walking and the clearing with its ancient, spreading oak burst upon us. Back and beyond it, as far as the eye could see, clustered trees and again trees. "We'll never get it," I whispered to the Doctor. "It's too beautiful." We rested under that majestic, giant white oak. It was the most marvelously symmetric tree we had ever seen. It stood alone in kingly dignity. Like all greatness, loneliness was its portion.

We talked much of farming possibilities and problems under the shelter of the mighty tree. Said old Mr. Benton: "You'll get lots of fun out of it; you love the open. But never think to make money. Farms don't bring much return. An independent living, sure. Heaps of work and trouble, the weather never right, the middleman getting all the profits." And more in this wise. Nothing of the sort could daunt us. We had gone over it all count-

less times; we had crossed our Rubicon. Come what might, it was the life we elected to live. And despite every adverse prophecy coming true in greater or less degree, we never regretted our great adventure. For adventure it surely proved to be, adventure in the most fascinating, most absorbing, most inspiring sense. And what, after all, does life mean? Is it not exploring one mystery after the other? Birth, love, work, death—all adventures, all mysteries, never to be solved in their entirety. And therein lies their lure. Always, a little beyond beckons the goal that is never quite reached.

We had still to see the farm part of this beautiful piece of land. So we struggled on through underbrush, over fallen tree trunks, under trailing creepers, and came out into an old, neglected orchard, with a view of the Adirondacks to the west, and of the Green Mountains to the east. The serene beauty of it all took our breath away. We met no one; we heard nothing but birds and squirrels. Far in the distance, a train rumbled down the valley. I know we were very quiet with the awe of what we were about to undertake, with the responsibility it would mean, and all the rest of it. Our old guide did the talking and enjoyed it. He told us whom to see, how to go about buying the land. He offered to do it for us. We filled our pockets with ripe apples that were going to waste on the ground, took a last look at the hills bathed in the mellow autumn sun, and walked, or rather

struggled, back through more lovely woods to the clearing, where stood the guardian spirit of it all, the big white oak. We returned to our tender and the launch, and at last home to the Long House with joy and wonder in our hearts, and dreams in our eyes.

Thus was born the ideal which brought to us our real life. Walter Clark, too, had attained success, and had bought a beautiful studio apartment, west of Central Park, in the upper Sixties, where he lived and worked among friends, among them James Montgomery Flagg, and John Wolcott Adams. He had attained a son. He, who so loved adventuring, had entered into the greatest adventure of all, the mystery of death.

Another spring came with all its sweet hope and promise. The Big Oak was ours. Our former neighbor had her wish. She had bought the Long House and our eight acres of woods and meadow, possession to be given the following October. Our last summer on the old place proved to be as happy as all the others that went before. There was a background of soberness and a pang of regret. After all, here was a part of our life that was ended. It had been a beautiful and enlightening part, rich in growth. With our Long House days success had come, and a fuller life, a deeper understanding and sympathy for all things human.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLANS AND DREAMS

DURING those last weeks of our stay at the Long House, we sailed up to our farm a number of times, growing each day more and more enthusiastic about its splendid situation and its opportunities. Our land was between two high roads, right in the midst of good Vermont farming country. We owned a beautiful valley, ringed with blue hills on three sides, and on the fourth was our beloved lake. Could anything be more perfect?

One day late in September we took our house party of four with us, lunch baskets and all. With us was Charles A. Platt, artist and architect. Some time before this, the Doctor and I had been site-hunting; that is, we looked for the place best suited for the new house. It was to be built of granite, out of the rocks that formed the backbone and the lake shore of our farm. By this time, the adventure of the house was fully planned by the Doctor. "Black magic man, man of dreams," as one of his friends called him. The house was to be Colonial, pure New England Colonial, gray stone, white trimmings, low ceilings, small-paned windows, portico. His ever restless, ever creative mind, the wonderful

quickness and surety with which he saw and lit upon the salient point, made my head spin.

My choice was a height of land beyond and to the southwest of the Big Oak, at a distance from the water, it is true, but giving a wondrous, wide sweep over the lake and the Adirondacks. The Doctor's choice was practically on the lake shore, high up on the rocks, in a big grove of pines, facing directly north, and so placed that two beautiful points enclosed the site with protecting arms. We took Mr. Platt through our woodland and over the farm land. He was completely enraptured with the startling beauty of it all. Nothing was said to him about our choice of a site for the house. We had marked both places with stones. His choice came within a few feet of the Doctor's. I had lost.

We staked it all out carefully, and then the two men went into excited, ecstatic planning. A good deal of it was so much Greek to me. The two artists, for the Doctor's almost pagan love of beauty was second only to his passion for healing, had the time of their lives. We common mortals made a fire on the big, shelving rocks, and got the picnic luncheon ready. They paid no heed to our repeated calls. When I scrambled up to them, they were deep in proportion of doors and windows, colonial drops and chimney breasts, spindle balustrades and other delightful, artistic things. Nevertheless they enjoyed our meal in the open, under God's shining sky and lofty pines. Mr. Platt,

whose professional work takes him to beautiful places all over these United States, told us that we had acquired one of the loveliest and most romantic parcels of land he had ever seen. His own country place was at beautiful Cornish, in an artists' and writers' colony, among whom were St. Gaudens, Maxfield Parrish, Norman Hapgood, Herbert Croly and others of note. "Yes," he said, "Cornish and Windsor are very lovely, but not like this."

Another week saw the keys of the Long House in the new owner's hands, saw us in New York, hard at work, full of renewed energy and quiet content. Before going home, we had found a neighbor in whose care we left Big Oak Farm, as we had already christened it. The caretaker was to post "No Trespass" signs on lake shore, in woods, and in meadows. Our land was a noted and much liked hunting and fishing place. We feared the carelessness of hunters and camp fires. My heart was in my mouth when I thought of fire in our woods. Also our neighbor was to plough the old orchard and all the meadow land possible, for agricultural purposes. We longed for the time to come, when we could look after our farm ourselves.

We decided to spend the following summer in travel abroad. It would be our last chance, we fully realized, for many years to come. Besides, we did not feel quite ready to begin putting up farmhouse and barns, our own dwelling with all its attendant lesser buildings, ice house, dock, and what not.

We thoroughly enjoyed our leisurely three months in London and in the English Cathedral towns and Lake country. Yet, despite the beauty of its old civilization, its centuries of culture, with all its background of fascinating historical interest, we were restless. We wanted to get at the vital thing, the thing that had come to be the pivot upon which our thoughts turned, our farm. We were strangely homesick for our lake and our hills.

Autumn came; and winter. Mr. Platt had his complex, beautifully-drawn blue prints ready and waiting for suggestions on our return. Poor, long-suffering men! The Doctor and the artist made praiseworthy efforts to make clear to me those enigmas of careful, drawn-to-scale plans. I spent hours at Mr. Platt's interesting and artistic studios. I hate to confess that, while I had a delightful time, north and south elevations, and so on, meant little to me. A charming water color Mr. Platt had made, showing the house with lawns and a drive and turn-around, was indeed lovely. Yet I saw nothing but deep woods where that drive was supposed to be. I fear I was more troubled at the thought of the towering pines which would have to be destroyed, than happy with what seemed like a dream of a perfectly-proportioned, simple, and dignified home in its beautiful setting of green.

What I wanted was a big kitchen, many cupboards, a big living room and library, and light and sun everywhere. In town there's so little light, and

the Long House with its wide porch and its many trees had always been full of shadows. Yes, even the laundry and cellar must have light. I wanted a linen room, and an old-fashioned flower garden. I cared little whether columns were fluted or plain, for Kewanee or other water systems, for proportions worked out to the last quarter inch, or for all the rest of their technical and artistic details. But these details were a matter of life and death to the Doctor and to Mr. Platt. We had many and heated arguments. To tell the truth, we rather enjoyed these discussions, all three. I wanted big windows, and high-ceilinged rooms. Right there we came to an impasse. In the end, we agreed to disagree about these things, so important in the eyes of both men. *Anything* I wished, so long as the ceiling and the windows were as they must be! I neither understood nor visualized what the "little things I wished" would cost, running water for instance, and a bathroom in the farmhouse. Wells could be dug, there was all of Lake Champlain. I had worlds to learn. I awoke to all these complex problems later on.

As we got deeper and deeper into the farming problems, we came to realize that to be a farmer meant more than we had ever dreamed could be possible. One should have a working knowledge of chemistry, physics, be a veterinary, an engineer and bridge builder, a mechanic, a carpenter and mason, know about the many diverse branches of husbandry

and animals, and a thousand other things equally important. Each farm industry, and there are many, is or ought to be an exact science. Each grain, for instance, requires exact knowledge of a number of details peculiar to itself. Each type of farm animal has its own peculiarity of physiology, its own peculiar psychology. Perhaps as important as any one of these things is the necessity for being a financier. Last, but not least, there is need of tremendous patience and tact in dealing with the human element, the hired men and women. In other words, to be a farmer, in the real and fullest sense of the word, means to be a man of sense and of work, a man of science and of vision.

The first of June came at last. We stopped at the Stevens House, a dear little old-fashioned hotel in Vergennes. Mr. and Mrs. Gaines, the proprietors, treated their guests like a big family. They helped to put us in the way of many things we needed to know. They told us of the most trustworthy workmen to be found locally. First of all, we looked for the right man to take the contract of building for us. The Doctor, as always, had his community ideal before him. He wanted to patronize "home talent," in as far as it was possible so to do. Therefore the work of building should be done by local workmen. This was at the same time less expensive and then, too, right from the start, it brought us into close touch with the

people, among whom we expected some day to make our permanent home.

We found a practical and experienced contractor and builder, who worked with his men as well as directed them. He was as honest as his limited intelligence permitted him to be. We never could count with any degree of certainty upon the outcome of anything. Here again, entered the element of mystery and adventure. For the Doctor, this gave a peculiar zest to whatever happened. I should have preferred greater exactness. We handed over the precious blue prints to our builder, and took him out to get the lay of the land. He "hed hunted an' fished on thet point mor'n once," he told us. "Knew it all th' way through." However, he was fairly staggered by our plans, and was glad the Doctor promised to stand back of him from the beginning to the end.

Meanwhile we had hired two saddle horses, for we planned to ride out to the farm every day and to get acquainted with its many problems. It was a rarely beautiful summer, and the eight-mile ride to and from Vergennes was lovely. They were eight miles of fairly bad clay road. But at the same time they were beautiful miles of rolling hill and fertile valley. Always we rode in view of fold upon fold of misty hills, of picturesque, winding streams, with the big, blue lake in the distance. We rode past prosperous, well-tilled farms, past tumble-down, neglected ones. Never once did we come across a

beggar, never once did we see a hungry-looking, pale child. We saw old, pre-Revolutionary gray stone or red brick, white-trimmed farmhouses, with charming fanlights and admirably-proportioned doorways. We rode through wooded lanes and deep woods roads, over stony, old-time causeways. Every mile of the way was beautiful, interesting, worth while.

On these daily rides we became acquainted with the children, and eventually were accepted by their elders. The Vermonter is restrained, not easily won. It is difficult to make friends with him, but once find the way to his heart, get him to understand your wish for friendship, your willingness to work as he works, have him realize your love for his native state, and he is yours. None is second to him in hospitality, in neighborliness. He expects you to watch out in your bargaining, as he expects to watch out for himself. Nothing wins his respect and his liking so quickly as meeting you on an equal ground of shrewdness and common sense.

As the long, happy days of the summer wore on, we became daily better acquainted with our land, its many possibilities, its many problems. Each day brought its dreams and its plans. We watched the farmers at their haying; hard, grueling hard work. Yet every man to whom we spoke said he liked "t' hay it better'n most annything else. Thet an' ploughin' in th' fall o' th' year." To this day it is

not quite clear to me why the men prefer these two seemingly so arduous jobs.

Arrangements were being made for the blasting, which marked the beginning of our home building; the blasting and the cutting down of many big pines. The entire lake shore and much of the woodland bordering it was a type of granite, hard, gray, and very beautiful. The foundation for our house had therefore to be blasted out of the live rock. The rock gained in this wise was to be used in the cellars and for the building of the outside walls. By the end of July all was in readiness. Forty big pines were felled. I wept to see them go down. Trees have souls, I think. Whoever has heard their sobbing moan as the trunk is severed from the roots cannot but believe it.

At the south end of our orchard, toward the hills, was part of a stone foundation in fairly good condition, and the cellar of an old house. On this foundation we decided to build our farmhouse. With the old orchard as a nucleus, we planned to plant more apple trees, as many as possible, without undue crowding. Trees, like humans, do not thrive when they must live and breathe too closely herded. We found a man, old Ben Bailey, who had some experience with fruit trees. He was another like Will Jordan of our Long House days, whose years of drink had left their aging mark. Old Ben, as he was called by all the countryside, could turn his hand to anything and everything on a farm and in the

open. He was weatherwise and woodswise, and when not in the thrall of drink, was absolutely dependable. We grew to be very fond of him, and I know he would have gone through fire and water for me, had I asked it.

Ben cut down trees that were too far gone to save, cut off dead limbs, and trimmed the rest. He scraped the bark to get rid of burrowing insects, and did everything possible to make up for the neglect of the past years. With this work we helped as much as we could; and so began our first real work with our own hands on our farm. Deep in our hearts, we felt, too, that by helping the old apple trees to renewed energy and vigor we were making amends for the death of the great pines, whose life had been given for the new life of our home.

How intensely we enjoyed the long days in the open! We turned our horses out to graze and we wandered, free as clouds in the sky, finding each day new and interesting things and places. We found more and more splendid trees; oaks, beeches, maples, basswood, birches, poplars, and every type of resinous, odorous evergreens. We discovered uncounted kinds of wild flowers, although at this high tide of summer there were comparatively few in bloom. There were ladies' slipper, Indian pipe, anemone, arethusa, adders' tongue, wild ginger, Jack-in-the-pulpit, trillium, and Canada lily, and a host of others. We found masses of wilding ferns

in the loveliest ravine imaginable. It immediately received its name, the Fernway. There were dainty maidenhair and maidenhair spleenwort with their glossy black stems, cinnamon fern, polypodium, royal fern, walking fern, that rare variety which propagates by burying its little pointed head in the surrounding moss. All these and more, we recognized. But there were many strangers whose names and habits we would have to learn. How like fairy gardens must these woods be in spring! Some day we would see the slow awakening of life after winter's sleep. We would hear the song of birds and waters after winter silence. Some day we would see it, would hear it all. We were being born again. It was good to be alive, good to look forward to years of splendid promise. Life would always hold dreams for us.

CHAPTER SIX

JOYS AND PROBLEMS

THERE were gray days too; days of sultry heat and threatening cloud; days when trailing mist hung low over the hills, and the smiling blue lake looked green and angry; days when our horses walked every step of the way from Vergennes to the farm, and yet were covered with lather when we slipped out of our saddles. We let them graze and cool off, before we led them to the lake for a drink, and a dip if they were so minded.

Gray days have a charm all their own. It is restful for eyes and spirit to get a change of perspective, to have the bright glare of sun and dazzling sky toned down to soft light and somber, quiet gray. The passion of growth seems momentarily arrested. There is a sense of calm, of waiting. Nature is gathering strength for a storm, for wind, for much-needed rain. We loved it all, vivid, radiant days, dull, leaden ones, thunder and lightning, wind and rain.

Among the many charming wild things that flourished on our farm, were a number of noxious weeds. However pleasing to the eye, beautiful in form and color of leaf and flower they may be, they

are unfortunately a pest on land needed for agriculture. The clearing where the Big Oak stood was covered with a delicate little, starry wild thing that reminded one of a French marigold. It was hawkweed, sometimes called wild marigold. The farmers hereabout call it by a name that is descriptive of their hatred for it, Devil's paintbrush. It grows in wreaths, fairly carpeting the ground with a soft, coppery-red above, and an intricate network of tough green and roots below. It is a lovely thing, odorous, decorative, with filmy, gossamer seeds, like the dandelion, which the wind carries everywhere.

On one leaden August day the Doctor and I began to clear our land of the pest, pulling it out root and all, wherever possible. We had with us a keg of salt on a wheelbarrow, to kill out what we could not uproot. It was hot work, but we were doing something real, we were starting the reclamation of our farm, with our four hands. This was farming. About us was color, light, peace. The wind brought to us dull thuds of chisel and hammer at work on our foundation. LeBoeuf, our builder, was about ready to fire the first big blast that evening, at quitting time. We were glad when noon came to straighten our aching backs, to take our bathing suits, and go over to the sandy beach, where we had landed that memorable day in September with the old surveyor.

Our swim was a joy. There is a tonic quality in the water of Lake Champlain, due, we imagined, to

the mountain springs that feed it. After dinner, which we brought with us from the hotel, we made tea over a smoky wood fire. Tea, with a tang of wood smoke, flavored by the wind in the pines! For an hour we watched the men working among the rocks and talked with them. Then we went back resignedly to our weed-pulling for the rest of the day. There were quantities of wild carrot, or Queen Anne's lace, which, eventually, we would have to uproot. Its graceful, lacy white flower heads nodded and swayed charmingly in every breeze. Worst of all, there was chicory, blue as the sunny sky, and as beautiful. We were determined to get rid of them all before seed-pod time, and the scattering of myriad additional seeds against future flowering.

At five we saddled our mounts and rode off toward Vergennes. Shortly before the time appointed, we stopped and listened for the blast. The Doctor dismounted and stood at our horses' heads. We held our breath. Promptly, almost to the second, the thing went off, with a deafening noise, like a hundred cannon. If noise meant anything, there must, by this, be a fairly deep gash in the granite rock. What with the terrific blast and low, growling thunder in the west, our beasts were very nervous. The storm, that had been threatening all day, burst with a roar of wind and rain, just as we reached the outskirts of the town. We cantered up to the Stevens House barn with water running in streams

from us and from our horses. It was a blessed relief after the heat of the day. The Doctor helped to look after the tired, nervous beasts. Only after that was done, did we get into dry things. We were deliciously tired, and hungry. Our simple supper tasted like the honey of Hymettus. We slept the sleep of the blest, with rain thundering on the porch roof outside our windows.

The next morning it was raining hard. Building operations always stop on days of storm, we knew. To tell the truth, although we would not acknowledge it to each other, we were a bit stiff, and glad to have a day to rest and to read. We saw our builder, who lived in Vergennes. He said that the two blasts had made a tremendous hole in the rock. Stone had been thrown as far as the Big Oak clearing. "Ye sh'd a' seen it. It wuz fine," he said. "Like a mess o' fireworks."

It was the first time we noticed this use of the word "mess." Later we grew quite accustomed to "a mess o' children," as well as a "mess o' corn or peas." There are a good many strong, old Saxon words in daily use hereabout. For instance, no one speaks of the weight of a thing. It is the "heft" of it. One of the picturesque old causeways is called the "Slang Bridge." The narrow stream flowing peacefully beneath, is the "Slang."

A telegram was handed to us. "Oh, dear," I thought, "some one of his patients needs the

Doctor." The message was this: "Your spaniel arrives to-night six P.M. Vergennes." So, before six, after a delightful day of quiet rain, at peace with our books and the world, we wended our surprised and wondering way to the station, a mile out of the little town. The train arrived on time. Out of the baggage car was handed a crate with a listless black dog, crouched disconsolately, as far out of the way of prying eyes as the small space of his wooden prison permitted. He was dead with fatigue, unhappy as a lonely dog can be. Suddenly, he awoke to the sound of the Doctor's voice. With a wild howl of joy, he hurled himself into the air, crate and all. We got him out of his prison with some trouble, he was so excited, and he actually cried with joy. I think we felt rather upset ourselves. Attached to his collar was a note telling us that "the dog was sick, would not eat, howled day and night." Therefore the telegram and dog had been dispatched to us.

We were all three happy. We had missed each other. Together we walked back into a gorgeous sunset of royal purple and coppery gold, with a wondrous double rainbow bridging the sky. Luckily, Mrs. Gaines of the hotel liked dogs. Scotty's manners were irreproachable, although he made friends with no one. No one could touch him, except, perhaps, a little child. After a thorough cleaning-up, of which he stood in decided need, we settled down happily for the night. Scotty lay down

between the two beds, where we could not escape him again.

The colorful sunset, followed by glittering stars in a bright, velvet sky, with a breeze from the north, presaged fine weather for the morrow. In the morning, all the world was washed in deep, fathomless blue and shining gold. The air had the indescribable smell of wet earth and growing green things, washed clean by wind and rain. There was in it a pure, transparent quality, as if cobwebs and shadows, veils upon veils, had been swept away. It was a day when "yokes are easy and burthens are light."

We set out for the lake with Scotty trotting contentedly between us. Before long we cantered our horses. Then the poor spaniel's troubles began. Soon his tongue hung out, and he panted fearfully. The Doctor slid out of his saddle, gathered up the dog in his arms, and in this way we rode happily out to the lake.

In the foundation on the lake shore, there was a huge gash in the rock. Broken stone was lying about everywhere, all the way from little pebbles to great, jagged rocks. It looked like death and destruction. They were preparing for new blasts. The scarring of the fair, peaceful woods seemed like desecration, as bad as the cutting down of the pines. This was the one part of our building that we both hated. Yet no bridge can be constructed, no church can be built without clamor and chaos. It

is a lesson man has learned from nature. Our most beautiful islands are the results of tremendous upheavals; our great mountains are but scars nature has made on the earth. What are noble sheets of water like Lake Champlain but survivals and results of elemental changes in the earth's surface?

Another ten days, our builder hoped, would see the blasting over, and the construction of the foundation walls begun. We went back for the remainder of the morning to our weed-pulling in the clearing. Scotty looked longingly at leaping squirrels and chipmunks, but dared not leave us long enough to pursue them. After our nooning, we decided to go in the builder's skiff for an exploring tour on the lake.

The Doctor gave Scotty a lecture on the advisability of sitting still in the boat and on the middle of the seat. This involved one of the many subjects about which we had agreed to disagree. I believe that dogs have intelligence and understand much. They know the tone of a beloved voice, the expression of a face they adore. But I cannot feel that they understand speech in our sense. However that may be, after a dip in the lake, dripping with water from every shining, curly hair, he hopped on to the seat designated by the Doctor, and sat there like a statue of a dog, immovable, watching us, the water, the sky, the shore, wrinkling his sensitive, rubbery nostrils at all the interesting sights and smells.

Naturally we were familiar with the lake south of us toward Basin Harbour on the east and Westport on the west. Therefore we paddled north. After getting out of Long Point Bay, we rowed due north toward Split Rock Light, a picturesque lighthouse and tower on the nearer New York shore. It is called Split Rock Light on account of a strange arch-like formation under which there is always restless water, even on a day of calm. The storm of the day before had so rarefied the atmosphere that the Adirondack peaks stood out against the clear background of sky like etchings on a painted wall, so deeply blue that they seemed black.

We paddled close to the Diamond Islands. Like many things in this deceiving world, they had little beauty and less romance when seen from close by. Wind-torn trees, shale rock shores, they were nothing more. They needed the haze of distance and the glamour of romance to seem interesting. We turned northeast, and after a row of four miles or thereabout, came to another and larger island, beautifully wooded, interesting in outline of shelving, pebbly, and sandy shore. This was Gardiner's Island, we discovered later. The lake here was very shallow, a sand and rock reef, accordingly marked by a government stake. "Surely," said the Doctor, "this must be a wondrous place for night spearing and for duck hunting." Rowing slowly, so as to avoid grounding our light and borrowed boat, we swished along between queerly-jointed, snaky

seaweeds and tall, reedy rushes, and found ourselves at the entrance to another one of the quiet, serene backwaters. We did not then know that this was Lewis Creek. We paddled slowly between the most charming banks imaginable, the stream winding in and out dreamily as is the wont of sleepy creeks. The banks were overgrown with soft maples and silver birches, with water willows and oaks, with here and there great shagbarks and hazel nut trees; all overhanging the water protectingly. They seemed to welcome and to beckon us in friendly fashion, like evergreen woods in winter, when they are heavy-laden with snow. Bordering the creek was pasture land, placid, peaceful, with cows and horses contentedly grazing. Overhead, the clouds were traveling as lazily as the winding stream. Beyond, far beyond, were green hills, blue hills folded in mystery. The silence of it all, its peace sank deep into our souls.

The westering sun awoke us at last to the necessity for returning home. We turned about reluctantly, and now, added to everything else, came the beauty of sunset time. Veils of pale gold, veils of soft red and mauve and pearl and opal changed from moment to moment, growing lovelier, softer, more iridescent as we came from out the shelter of the stream with its enfolding trees into the marshy rushes. Suddenly we found ourselves floating into the broad lake. Like the burst of a great chord of splendid music was that sudden view of the

When Spring Comes to Lewis Creek and the Ancient Willow.

lake, with the high peaks of the Adirondacks flaming in sunset glory. We were blinded with its unearthly beauty and grandeur. It was one of the sights that one treasures, that comes back in after years, like the poignant fragrance marking a time of joy or of grief.

And so we came through the pageant of evening glory into our own bay and home to find no disturbing sound of hammer and chisel, nothing but the quiet dusk and low bird calls. Our horses came whinnying to meet us, glad to be saddled and mounted. Darkness descended before we arrived at Vergennes. We were alone in a world of shadowy distances and fragrant silence. Our horses' hoofs made no sound on the soft dirt road. It was like a dream of finding oneself in an ancient magician's audience hall, with velvet-hung walls and ceiling studded with silver stars.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GRANITE WALLS AND ROMANCE

SCOTTY and I had a lonely week, while the Doctor was away on a consultation trip. We went out to the farm only once. They were getting on splendidly with the blasting and expected to surprise the Doctor on his return by having that part of the job completed. At the same time the old foundation and cellar on which we intended building our farmhouse was in process of repair. Our builder would also have this job ready against the Doctor's return. It was quite wonderful how he had gained the confidence and respect and the liking of the workmen. To a man, they did their utmost to surprise "the Doc," and to show him how well and how faithfully they worked in his absence. During the past weeks he had cared for several of the men, and had given good advice to as many more. Already the village doctors were getting into the habit of asking his help in complicated cases. One of them said to me: "I got more out of the Doctor's talk and illustrations the other night, than I learned in a year's college course."

Meanwhile I had the time to do some necessary reading along agricultural lines. Among other

things, I studied vegetable growing, flower culture, poultry raising and its care, soil culture, and crop rotation. We had gathered together during the past winter a good deal of literature on pomology. Pomology I read and studied—and marveled. The labor involved in acquiring even a working knowledge of what seemed absolutely necessary for intelligent supervision, still more for personal endeavor, was stupendous. There are hundreds of varieties of apples, each with its own characteristics of growth, form, color, needs. There are dozens of insect pests, vegetable and animal, that must be fought in various ways, by poison stomach and contact sprays, by digging out of the bark, even out of the heartwood of the young trees. I studied interpollination, grafting methods, soil fertility, pruning, picking and packing devices, shipping and storage, and more along the same lines. Each subject was a tremendous study in itself, fascinating, absorbing. I longed for the time to come, when we could begin to work out practically all these exact scientific, wordy theories. The time would come next spring, for we intended ordering sapling fruit trees from the nursery before our return to New York in late September.

I fairly jumped when a knock sounded at the door. A man to see me, sent by our builder at the lake. I wondered. "Th' ol' man tol' me t' tell ye thet yer hosses an't nowhar t' be faoun'. We ben a' lookin' all araoun'. An't no un a seen 'em." Here

was strange news. I wished the Doctor had been here to cope with this emergency in his usual undisturbed, calm way. I had sent the two saddle mares out to the farm to graze, for a holiday, during the Doctor's absence. Certainly they could not have disappeared into thin air during the night. I was not long left in doubt.

During supper in the pleasant, scrupulously clean dining room, with a vase of flowers on each table, Mr. Gaines came in to speak to me. Two young people were in the parlor waiting to see me. "I got a hunch, it's about yer horses," he volunteered. Well, I devoutly hoped his hunch was right.

The parlor of the old Stevens House was a quaint, over-furnished, big room. It was a queer mixture of mid-Victorian, ornate walnut and marble-topped tables, simple mahogany chairs and settees, whatnots and mirrors. There was an old, square piano with a cracked sounding board, and keys that stuck; upholstered Morris chairs and rockers with crocheted doilies pinned to the resting place for tired heads. There were growing things, green ferns and scarlet geraniums in bloom. The room had an air of home and comfort, as if it had been lived in, as if things had happened there. It is a curious fact, that human life and happenings leave an essence, a something intangible, unexplained, like a remembered fragrance.

My unexpected guests rose nervously, as I entered. The girl, for she could not have been more

than seventeen or eighteen, had a sweet, innocent face. She wore a plain, home-cut blue gingham dress that deepened the blue of her eyes: eyes that reminded me of cornflowers in French wheatfields. The man, hardly more than a boy, stood twisting his worn straw hat round and round. I made them sit down and asked them to tell me all about it. I had noticed very shiny, new-looking plain gold bands on the ring fingers of each frightened young hand. "Is it about my horses?" I asked. The girl burst into tears and the boy stuttered and stammered. After patient questioning, I finally got the story. To tell the shameful truth, I was delighted with them. Naturally, I did not dare to let them see it. "Oh, dear, what fun it will be telling the Doctor!"

Their story was old as the eternal hills. Yet, as always, it was everlastingly new to the young lovers —as Heine describes so vividly: "Es ist eine alte Geschichte." Like all the lovers of all the world, none had ever loved more dearly than they two; none had ever lived through more troublous times. They knew what they had done was wrong, terribly wrong. They would do whatever I thought right to make amends. What had happened was this. They were neighbors' children. Their families had owned adjoining farms for generations. There were old family quarrels, so old that the young people did not know what it was all about. Both fathers objected to their marriage. Last night they had met after chores, had walked about for hours in the

starlight, trying to think of ways and means. They had loved since they could remember. It sounded to me as if a hundred years had passed over their baby heads. Suddenly, out of the star-lit shadows, two horses loomed up. They might borrow the horses, ride to Burlington, and be married before sunup! "We know ye caint fergive whut we done, but,—" and they looked at each other, at me. Well, all the world loves a lover. They were so ridiculously young and in earnest. Scotty, strangely enough, was quiet, did not growl low in his throat. Therefore he approved of them. "Yer hosses didn't take no hurt, missus. We'll do annything ye say." I thought of what they would have to face later, when their two families heard of the marriage.

I tried hard to look severe, as I most decidedly should have done. "Be good to each other."— They managed to take themselves away, a thing so difficult for the untutored to accomplish. I was happy indeed, knowing that the mares were safe, to meet up with a marriage that smacked of medieval romance.

The following day was Saturday. By night, I got word that the blasting was at an end. Sunday morning, early, I expected the Doctor to return. Scotty and I met him at the station with our sheaf of miscellaneous news, ranging all the way from blasted granite to medieval romance. It was such fun telling him things. He had a gift of making

narration easy. The story gained an air of added interest even to me, in the telling. "I like the way you have of letting horse thieves off with a friendly talk," with pretended severity. I expected nothing less. "How can you say horse thieves! If you had seen that girl wife's flower-like face," I began. "I should most certainly have kissed her, so there!"

We drove out to the lake with LeBoeuf next morning before seven o'clock; drove into a morning of pearly mist with gossamer veils of coming autumn in the tonic air. The night had woven lacy cobwebs and had dropped them on the glistening grasses. Blue asters and bright goldenrod lined the roadsides. Sumac berries gave a touch of autumn color. In the orchards early apples gleamed palely red. Sheaves of oats, barley, and wheat were carefully set up to dry in the meadows against threshing time. Pumpkins were turning golden in the ripening field corn that had tasseled out bravely. The silk on its big ears was red-brown. The corn was in the milk, ready to be harvested. Here and there, pale yellow leaves fluttered softly to earth, like the pale yellow butterflies that hovered low in the roads. All this color, this matured life was harbinger of autumn, of fulfillment.

As we drove across the Slang Bridge, a great blue heron alighted on a pine stump, a beautiful thing in flight, though so ungainly as he stands poised on his lanky legs. The Slang Bridge is one of the old stone causeways. Bad as roads go, it is overflowed

after each spring freshet; but it is beautiful at all times. Is there any time when a marsh is not a joy for the seeing eye? On this early autumn day it was filled with soft reds and yellows and browns on a distemper of gray and bright green. It was full of swaying reeds and undulating lily pods, full of aromatic smells of sedge and flag and arrowroot. "See the wild duck," whispered the Doctor excitedly, "six, eight, more than a dozen of them, black duck, feeding in the wild oats and rice." "Gosh, wish'd I hed my gun," said LeBoeuf. "Th' dum things er right in line." I rejoiced that there was no gun handy. Wild flowers and wild game are so beautiful in their home haunts. They seem so happy. They make part of so wonderful, so peaceful a picture like the bittersweet berries climbing the rail of the old bridge. The golden berries hung bright among their soft, green leaves. Soon hoar frost would break them open to show their fiery-red hearts.

We drove on to the farm in the most leisurely way. When we came to the Big Oak clearing, we let the builder go on to the lake. We stopped to look at our mares. They seemed no worse for their romantic night ride. Scotty and they greeted each other like old friends. Over at the foundation work was going on. They made haste, it seemed, slowly. The Doctor helped LeBoeuf get his plumb lines and other paraphernalia ready, and together they measured out the foundation and the cellar walls.

It was exciting to think that the house was actually begun. It was so utterly different from the setting of the cedar posts for the porch of the Long House years ago, and yet, in essence, it was the same.

Meanwhile débris was cleared away, cement and sand were being mixed, great stones were hauled close, and more preparatory work done. There were, approximately, thirty or forty men at work and a number of teams. A rough shack was in course of building, on rocks to the southwest of the foundation, where the ice house and cold storage place was later to be. It was intended for a workmen's boarding and lodging house. This arrangement would facilitate and hasten the work of construction. We planned and hoped it might go on right through the winter. If everything went along without serious hitch, the builder expected to get foundation and side walls up and the roof on, before frost. Hard or black frost is always to be expected in early November, if not before. Of course, hard frost stops all mason and cement work.

It was curious to watch the leisurely methods of these rural workers, men of American or of French-Canadian birth. Then to think of city gangs of foreigners working at top speed under driving, swearing Irish or American foremen. Despite all the apparent leisurely manner, stopping to light pipes, stopping to talk and to wonder—"abaout fishin', duck huntin'," or an escaped State School boy, and similar things of local interest, the work

went steadily on. Stone was laid upon stone. The north wall grew apace. Much was accomplished each day. There was about it all a very human quality. There was none of the automatic, soulless, machine-like, don't-care-if-you-die quality about the job that is so characteristic of big city construction gangs. Gangs they are rightly named. Here each man was a unit. Each man was not merely a teamster, or a mason, or a carpenter, or helper,—each man could do all or any one of these things and was willing to go from one to the other as necessity or circumstance required.

There were mistakes made, there was shirking, there was stupidity, but it was not soulless. On the contrary, there was a spirit of pulling together, an *esprit de corps,* that was splendid. How much was in these men, how much was due to the Doctor's encouragement and jollying and generalship, it was hard to say. Whatever it was, it helped along the construction of our home tremendously. It was good to feel that even in this earliest beginning there was unity and comradeship. There was a spirit of calm, of satisfaction, of gaiety, that fitted in well with the content and the happiness of harvest time.

The sun shone brilliantly from a radiant sky. The men whistled and sang at their work. Fat, red-brown woodchucks came out of their burrows, watched for a moment wonderingly all this strange activity and noise in their formerly quiet haunts, wondered if it boded ill to them. Squirrels chat-

tered in the cedars, about their winter stores, perhaps. Red-winged blackbirds and white-tailed swallows were gathering in families and in flocks, undisturbed by all the turmoil. It was about time to plan their autumn flight. Cooling winds whispered in the tall pines. They bent their plumed heads in unison. The water played in tune with the trees and the winds, and the far hills and the valleys sang.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A UNIQUE CHRISTMAS AND EMBRYO FARMING

WE received weekly reports from our builder. Things were going "like a house afire." Things had taken an "awful slump." He was "fair discouraged." The old man had much of the temperamental color of his French ancestors. "Would not the Doctor or the Missus please come up?" He must see one or the other or both. We found, in the end, that we had to go up at least once or twice a month, to keep up the old man's spirits and his enthusiasm. They were hard trips, especially for the Doctor. He went up at midnight of Saturday, had but a few hours of daylight at the farm, and returned the same night, so as to keep his many appointments on Monday. When I went up to lend the glamour of my presence, as it were, I remained two days, at least. The Doctor would have it no other way. I stayed with Mrs. Gaines at the Vergennes hotel over night.

Christmas we went up together, prepared to camp at the Stone House. The "house" was at its present stage a huge, barn-like structure, with great, gray walls, yawning caverns of Stygian darkness,

and a roof so high above us that we were reminded of Winchester Cathedral. But there we were, at home, prepared for anything.

The builder left for his drive back to Vergennes at dusk, which fell shortly after four on that late December day. We felt as if we were alone in a strange world of trees, shadows, and stone. The workmen's boarding place on the rocks was dark and untenanted. The workers had all gone to their homes to be with their families for the holiday. One end of what was in reality the cellar was fairly cleaned up. Our tent had been set up and the floor covered with plank and cedar and spruce. It smelled nice and Christmassy. I laid our old camp canvas table cloth on the folding table, drew up our camp chairs, and made up our cot beds. When two safety lanterns were lighted, and a blue flame oil heater was burning brightly, our tent looked festive and cosy.

"Now for a Christmas tree," said the Doctor. We must cut it before nightfall." We quickly found and cut a little, straight, spreading hemlock. It was not cold. There was no snow. Beyond the pines hung a gorgeous, red sunset curtain. The east was softly luminous with a full moon rising over the great oaks and white birches. Christmas night, the night dedicated by all the centuries and countless peoples to peace and good will! Here in God's silent, wide dim woods, there was deep, wondrous deep peace. The world seemed bathed,

flooded with peace; like the quiet of the silver rain the moon was pouring down on all things.

When we got back our brightly-lighted tent glowed with welcome cheer. Inside our walls of canvas it was warm as toast. The warmth brought out strongly the aromatic smell of evergreen boughs on floor and on tent walls. While I made our little hemlock gay with red candles and scarlet ribbon, the Doctor made a rude fireplace, just outside our tent. He made a circle of the stone, which lay at hand everywhere on the cement floor. Then he built a fire, which lit up our cathedral vault fitfully. It seemed like trying the life of centuries past. We had with us our camp and cooking outfit. We grilled the chops brought all the way from New York—how far away it was—on forked sticks over the fire; we baked sweet potatoes in the ashes, we made coffee inside the tent. When red apples from our own trees were on the camp table, with its gaily-lighted tree, and the steaming hot picnic meal was ready, life seemed a thing worth any struggle, a great adventure filled with interest and happiness. Our Christmas dinner in a tent set up in a cellar tasted like a feast of Lucullus. Nightingales' tongues and wine, cooled in the snows from distant mountains, could not have been half so good.

We decided that it was the most delightful Christmas we had ever experienced. Surely it was unique, weird almost, when our fire flared and lit up the great stones in the walls that were more than

a foot thick, the roof seemingly miles above us, and the broken stone lying about. On that night the spirit of our new home was born, our first night within the intimacy and the safety of its four walls.

Snow fell toward morning despite the moonlit night. We awoke to the beauty of a mild, sunny, glittery Christmas day, and spent it in the woods and on the lake. Another night in our tent, and then we went back to New York, to reality, and to work. We both voted it the most exhilarating and amusing outing we had ever had, and promised ourselves we would repeat it or something akin to it. Yet, as happens so often in busy, full lives, we never again experienced anything even faintly resembling this truly merry Christmas.

After the holidays, our building went steadily on. Each week saw much accomplished. By March, they had finished plastering the inner walls. The heating plant had been installed at the earliest possible moment for the sake of warmth for the workers, and to dry out the plaster. By April, door casings and windows were in. We confidently expected to be able to live in the Stone House by the first of June, although it would be far from finished, we knew. We both went up a number of times to hearten the builder and to advise him regarding doubtful points. He had never come in contact with so complicated a plumbing and water system in his life before. "What in heaven's name did ye want with two bathrooms in one house? Ye've all

th' lake outdoors to bathe in, in summertime." He did not mention the winters.

Meanwhile getting from Vergennes or Ferrisburgh station to the lake in deep snows and through deeper drifts was not always the simplest thing. Both the Doctor and I had several adventures, resulting on two occasions in not getting there at all. One morning I started out from the hotel at Vergennes, although Mrs. Gaines tried her best to dissuade me, saying we'd not make it anyway. I had come up all the way from New York to go to the farm, and if it was humanly possible, I intended so to do. The driver and I started, got about two miles out, had to shovel ourselves and the horses out of the drifts several times. Much to my disgust, we had to turn back. Right there, I learned my lesson about country roads during and after a great storm of wind and snow. When I returned home I found it hard to explain, was ashamed to explain, that I had actually not seen the farm or the builder. Yet I had never been so cold or so exhausted in my life.

The Doctor's experience, in a way, was worse and more dangerous. He, too, set out, as I had done, in a blizzard to take his late train back to New York. It was after nightfall. They started against the advice of everyone, and got less than half a mile away from the lake. Then they must have driven 'round and 'round in a circle, all the time in Chester Hawkin's pasture, instead of in the road, unable to sense direction owing to the wind and the storm.

Long after midnight they managed to get back to our farmhouse, and that was owing to the sagacity of the team. By that time both horses and men were more than half frozen.

By the first of April the farmhouse was ready for the family we had engaged to work for us. The clap-boarded cottage was well built, had a slate roof and red brick chimneys. Eventually we intended painting it colonial yellow, with pale green shutters. All the buildings were to be a pale colonial yellow. The house had a bathroom and running hot and cold water in the kitchen, piped from a windmill set high above the lake. This water system was a temporary thing. Another year, the Doctor expected to dig an artesian well so as to supply both farmhouse and barns with running water.

With the end of April came the time for setting out our young orchards. I went up and stayed at the farmhouse for two weeks. The children soon grew to like me, and through them I won the older members of our farm family. To save them embarrassment as well as for my own sake, I had my meals alone. They were surprisingly satisfactory. But then, I was prepared to find everything good. I was so elated with the beauty of the early spring, and with the beauty of the Stone House, despite its low ceilings and its small windows. Of course, Mr. Platt and the Doctor were right.

Every waking hour was fraught with joyous interest. It was cold and damp, the mud of the roads

was unspeakable; walking was difficult. But the sky was radiant, the sun blindingly bright, the wind and the air redolent of awakening spring. Robins, bluebirds, phœbes, warblers, even orioles; all the summer birds were returning. Each morning brought new voices. Sap was rising in the trees, leaf buds were swelling, were bursting, and the yellow brown meadows were shimmering green. Over the cedar woods, far away, there were clouds of floating green and gray, poplars and birches awaking from their winter sleep. It was all so beautiful, that my throat ached and my eyes filled, and I wished the man of dreams might have left his work and his patients and lived through it all with me.

I bought two dozen pure-bred barred Plymouth Rock hens and a splendid, big rooster, and also some settings of eggs to start the hennery. As soon as the hens began to feel at home in their new quarters, they showed signs of wanting to set. They remained on their nests constantly to keep their fluffy bodies warm, took on an air of calm and motherliness, except when one tried to remove them from their chosen place. They could be fairly nasty when they tried, squawking and trying to bite. Lina, our farmer's wife, and I set the mother hens on clean nests of straw, in a place by themselves, where the laying hens would not disturb them nor their eggs. For Lina, this was a commonplace thing, part of the day's work in spring. For me, it was both inter-

esting and exciting to work at last with a vital thing, with something that was alive, instead of, for instance, cataloguing medical monographs, or looking up bibliographies and statistics of defective children. It was wonderful to know that those hard-shelled eggs would develop into baby chicks after twenty-one short days; to watch the brooding mother hen leave her eggs barely long enough to eat and to drink; to see her turning her eggs daily. There were bad mothers too; they let their eggs get chilled. Like human mothers, they wanted to gad about.

No trees had as yet been planted. The old French-Canadian whom I had hired for the tree-planting, said the ground was still too wet. A great part of our farm was clay land, which dries slowly. We bought our trees from Newell, of Westport across the lake. He was an interesting old man, a typical old-time farmer. He represented a Rochester nursery house, and he knew pretty much all that concerned apple and other Northern fruit growing. He could give you practical information regarding soil fertility, and farm and garden lore. Although not lacking in intelligence, he clung to old, leisurely methods of husbandry. Yet he sent his son to an agricultural school. His allegiance to his firm, and his honesty, both were proverbial in our valley. He was a familiar figure on our roads, with his paralyzed right arm, his snow-white hair and beard, his kindly, blue eyes. He liked best to walk

from farm to farm, carrying his shabby bag that bulged with highly-colored catalogues, in which all apples, all pears, all berries, all roses grow to wondrous size and perfection. He came to us in autumn and again in spring. We miss him.

Our apple trees were shipped to us in early spring, in March, while in a wholly dormant state. They were heeled in, that is, buried in a slanting position in soft, moist earth, with the tops uncovered. They remained in their sheltered place and position until the frost should leave the ground and holes could be dug to set out the trees.

On Sunday morning, I had a surprise. The Doctor arrived at the farm. He was disappointed about the trees, but the progress they had made on our house was gratifying. The cornice was in place, the cap stones over doors and windows were "just right." He had selected them on the lake shore and in the woods, stones that were sun-cracked and beautifully-colored. It was a house at last, a simple, dignified, well-proportioned one. It satisfied even the man of dreams. "Now, don't you like the ceilings and the windows?" he asked. "Who cares about ceilings and windows, when the wind and the air and everything is filled with music!" I replied.

The Doctor stayed long enough to make some real farm purchases. Two sleek mild-eyed Jersey heifers came first. Then two shoats, baby pigs. And most important of all, he bought a heavy draft team. There were already several cats and David,

a shaggy dog, part shepherd, part collie. Like most collies, David was the lovingest thing. His intelligence was quite human, especially in regard to cows. He had never been trained in any way. Instinctively he knew. He brought the heifers to and from the pasture morning and night. Never once did he bite or molest them unnecessarily. He kept them in the middle of the road by making peculiar little sounds of protest and giving a soft, scampering nip at their hind legs. This modest and small beginning seemed like a lot of stock to me. "You wait and see what we'll have in a few years from now," said the Doctor. It was utterly impossible for him to think only of the thing in hand. The present and its problems were there to be coped with in the best way imaginable. But the all-important, the fascinating thing was the vision.

My Canadian helper decided that the time had come to set the young apple trees. He was a quaint, gentle peasant. I have seen his like in Normandy. He called himself Peter Field, although his name was Pierre Deschamps. He said they "made fahn" of his French name in Vergennes. Together we staked out the land for the new orchard. John and Peter dug the holes. The trees were set thirty feet apart each way. By noon thirty holes were ready for the little trees. One must not open up too many holes at a time, the old man explained to me, lest the earth dry. Into each hole he put a handful of high-grade fertilizer, carefully mixed with earth,

so as not to burn the tiny roots and rootlets. I cut apart the bundles of sleeping, yet living trees. We planted alternately a row of Rhode Island Greenings and a row of McIntosh Reds. A row of one variety, then a row of the other, for the sake of inter-pollination. Old Peter showed me how to prune off roots that were bruised, taking care not to injure the tap root; also how to prune tapering branches, to permit no more breathing above the ground than below. Then I proudly and painstakingly set the baby tree in its prepared hole. Old Peter spread out the rootlets, so that each one would have room to live and to breathe. He pulverized the earth around them, taking out stones and hard lumps. When the roots were deeply buried in friable dirt, John took his spade and filled in all the earth that had been dug out of the hole and more. Then as I held the tree in its upright position, the old man stamped down the earth around it. Winds could not disturb the little tree.

When he had finished he took off his worn cap and crossed himself devoutly. His lips moved. "Maybe, ma'am, y' tink me fool ol' man," in his bastard Canuck English. "I tink me, I say leetl' pray to our good God for leetl' tree. He grow better, sur'." I turned away to hide the tears. What a wondrous thing is faith, the simplicity, the dignity, the consolation of it! As each sapling stood straight and upright in its new home, he repeated his little ceremony. Somehow, it seemed in keeping

with the hope, the tenderness of spring, with the greening meadows, the singing and the nest-building of birds.

Day after day we planted, until three hundred little trees stood bravely in straight, even rows, both sides of what was later to be the drive. The old orchard trees showed great improvement. Like most growing things, they were trying to show their gratitude for the work done for them in the autumn. They were turning from dull brown to living, glowing red. Their hearts were beginning to beat and their life blood to circulate. They seemed to look protectingly, lovingly at the baby trees we had planted in their midst and all about them.

There were days of rain when John and Peter cleaned and picked up around the barn and sheds and henhouse. All these buildings were only finished in part. Every effort was put on the work at the Stone House. Each day of rain brought in its wake more and richer color. It was the first of May. The woods were still soggy. Water lay in little pools in every hollow. On shrubs and bushes brown buds were tipping their points with pale green. Fern fronds were tightly-curled green corkscrews. Trillium lily leaves were swelling buds of color, as were the jacks-in-the-pulpit. Wild ginger showed its awakening pale leaves. One morning, when the sunshine was so bright that it fairly hurt, I found my first hepatica under its dead brown, and

woolly, new green leaves. I felt like old Peter. I think a prayer was in my heart, and I know I sang for sheer joy.

How I wished I might have stayed at the farm, until the baby chicks should creep out of their shells. There was much to call me back home to New York. The Doctor had begun to buy things for the Stone House. He loved to "buy things," decorative things for our home. Never, at his soberest times, did he know the exact amounts he was spending. Nor did he much care. A thing pleased him; it was useful, beautiful, artistic. How could he be expected to think of the unimportant detail of cost? Yes, it was time to go back and "to throw cold water" on his joyous and unconcerned buying.

CHAPTER NINE

AT THE FARM AT LAST

WE went out to the ocean end of Long Island to see a driving pair. They proved to be two beautiful young bay fillies, coming four and five, just what the Doctor wanted. They were Kentucky thoroughbreds, broken to both saddle and harness. We bought them to the accompaniment of bitter weeping on the part of the owner's wife and daughter. The owner said that he could not afford to keep a motor and horses, especially when the horses could be used only for the lighest work. They really were not fitted for anything but driving.

One day in late May I was called to the telephone. With abject apology the Long Island man explained. The time had come to ship the fillies. His wife and little daughter were so desperately unhappy, that he would have to break his word. They were willing to give up the car if only they might keep the fillies. What could he do? Would I explain to the Doctor? He was both ashamed and afraid to do so. He was returning our cheque. I was disappointed, and did not hesitate to say so. The Doctor, to whom the man dreaded to explain,

understood the matter much better than I did, and wrote him a little note. By messenger, the following day, came a great box with every type of knife for farm use, from pruning shears for trees to butchering knives for hogs. But we had no driving team.

We were busy selecting furniture and furnishings to take up to the farm, everything that could possibly be spared from our New York home. The Doctor chose favorite books, pet prints, rugs he liked, in fact, anything and everything. "After all," he said, "New York is our working home. It's got to be for some years to come. But the Stone House is our real, our spiritual home. Let's take all our pet possessions, the things we love best, up there." In the end, we compromised. I refused to dismantle completely our house in town.

We enjoyed buying hardware for doors and windows, looking up fire screens and motor boats, and a big pipe organ, all the things we hoped some day to possess. We bought our first working garden and farm tools. We bought driving harness and horse blankets, and the thousand and one things necessary to begin our life on the farm in sober earnest. It was strange, how we felt right from the start, that we were doing the permanent thing at last. At our farm we would eventually live our life and end it. It was lucky for the Doctor's work that his was not a one-track mind, like mine. His patients surely would have suffered. For him, the

work he was doing at the moment, was the only thing in existence. When he closed his office door, there existed nothing and no one in all the world, but the soul who had appealed to his aid. It often seemed to me as if it were souls that he cured, rather than bodies. He gave himself utterly, there was no reserve. The wear and tear of his life was appalling. And there was the wonder, the philosopher's stone of the farm. It was the absolute change from things abnormal and pathologic to things normal and sane.

My mind was so filled with the thought and the joy of the farm that I fairly hated my spring housekeeping duties; the cleaning of cupboards and general going-over of our house. I remembered the days long gone, when my father celebrated our birthdays. He prepared our surprise in a room that we were in honor bound not to enter, nor even to peek through the keyhole. May was endlessly long that year, like the time before those vanished childhood birthdays. However, it finally came to an end. It seemed best for me to go up with our cook ahead of the remainder of the family. In this way, we might have at least a semblance of home and order before the Doctor arrived. He had lived through a particularly trying winter and spring, and was fairly near the breaking point nervously.

Our faithful Nora had married her Patrick. Her place as cook was now filled by one of her numerous cousins, Mary by name. Mary and I took the night

train and were duly met at Ferrisburgh station by John. Ferrisburgh was now our postoffice, being four miles nearer to our farm than Vergennes. Vergennes was still the base of supplies, Ferrisburgh consisting of the postoffice and general store, the blacksmith shop, the creamery, and a few cottages, and the Town Hall.

John said, in the sensational way so dear to his kind: "Ye'll not know whar t' set yer feet, an' haow ye be goin' t' do anny work, I'd like t' know. Th' haouse, th' mansion,"—he corrected himself, "is full o' evry kin' o' mess, wi' carpenters an' painters. Ye caint git aout ner in 'thaout walkin' up plank an' stone. Guess ye'll hev t' walk top o' barrels an' boxes in yer kitchen. Lina, she says, she an't never seed th' like on 't. An' they're cementin' o' th' yard." He turned to me. "I got yer things ye wrote me t', fr'm Basin Harbour." Mary looked worried. She could not understand this hired man's talking before he was asked to speak. She did not know the equality idea of the rural Vermont worker. He intended no disrespect. He was trying to be hospitable and pleasant. His monotonous, fortunately low voice trailed on.

I barely heard him, for we were driving into a gloriously fresh, golden morning of such fragrance and clearness as one remembers only in dreams. The roadsides were lined with wild things in joyous bloom, cherry, plum, hawthorn. Apple trees in meadows were drifted with thousands of white

butterflies, or what looked like winged things. But these winged things were poignantly fragrant. I had never seen anything so delicately, so touchingly lovely. The freshness of the young leaves, the color of the lake in the distance, the smell of the blossoms, the singing of countless birds filled the world.

We arrived. There had been disorder and upset, years ago, when we came to the newly-finished Long House. Compared to what we now saw, it had been heavenly order and quiet. There was our beautiful house surrounded on every side by deep, jagged holes filled with broken stone, mortar, lumber, with débris of every imaginable description piled up every which way.—Right there I stopped. Was this not the very reason for coming to-day? Was it not exactly what we had expected and known?—We had three days clear to work. There to the north, beyond the trees, was the lake, sparkling and dancing in the sun. There were the trees in their exquisite dress of spring. Where was my sense of proportion?

As John had said, we walked up an inclined, slippery plank, with a deep hole of broken stone eight feet or so below, to fall into. Our kitchen was filled with boxes and crates and barrels piled high, a perfect pandemonium of mess, so to speak, but it was flooded with sunlight. A splendid fire cheered up the brand-new, much benickeled range. Breakfast was ready, the builder told us. This was Lina's contribution for our comfort. I sat on a box

and had a good cup of coffee, with our own cream and our own really-truly, fresh eggs, and I'd hate to say how many of Lina's good soda biscuit, with cream, not creamery butter. All these goodies were placed democratically on the top of a Park and Tilford barrel, covered with clean white paper. Strange, how one's outlook upon life and a troublous world can be changed by a satisfactory breakfast! As quickly as I could, I donned my Long House camp clothes, and went through the house on an inspection tour. I had my oceans of light and sun. Even the laundry and cellars were flooded with light. There were all the cupboards, and my linen room, and every last thing anyone could wish for, and infinitely more. And everywhere was the beautiful outlook into the trees, over the lake, and beyond to the hills.

Fully twenty men were at work in or about the house. All offered to help. I set one to open barrels and another to clean up brick, mortar, lumber, and nails out of the rooms we wanted to set in order first. No cleaning had been done since the building of fireplaces, the adjusting of moldings, or the setting in of windows and doors. When we left the Long House we had carefully marked boxes and barrels and had entered their contents in a little book. The transportation from Basin Harbour over muddy roads, and in rain and sun had obliterated every trace of lettering. When we wanted pillows and blankets, we found kitchen ware. When

towels were the one thing needed, we found flags. By this time, we were game for anything. What did it all matter? We were at the farm, in the Stone House, beginning to make it into a home. It was June in a world of light and color. The man of dreams would soon come. "God's in his heaven, All's right with the world."

By night the study was clean and sweet. Shades were hung. The green-stained table from the Long House living room and the spindle chairs were in place. With a study lamp in the center, writing and smoking materials at hand, all the books I could find put about, with a rug on the floor and the red sunset light filtering in, it was good to look at. Next came our bedroom. There I had another one of the surprises so loved by the Doctor. John asked to see me, and said the Doctor had written him about some crates marked Hampton Shops, which contained furniture for the north bedroom. Did I wish him to unpack the crates? Mary had told him we were cleaning the north rooms. I had the crates opened, wondering what on earth they contained. Out of much paper and many pads of excelsior emerged an adorable bedroom set of mahogany.

The next morning, after a six o'clock breakfast, I made up my mind to go exploring to the farm and into the woods before beginning to work. I took Mary with me. "Soon's I can, when we get our house to rights, I'd like to milk a cow, ma'am.

'Twill be like home to me thin," said the Irish woman wistfully. She had left her people and the little farm in Donegal many years before, to try the country where money could be picked up in the streets. Like so many emigrants, whose friends have gone ahead and persuaded those at home to follow, she had found that, even in wonderful America, one must work to live.

At the henhouse, we found fluffy baby chicks with the mother hen. Directly she saw us, she ruffled up her feathers, and called her babies to her for protection. She did not know, as yet, that we were friends. We went to the barn, where a baby heifer calf had arrived five days before. It was to be raised, therefore was not permitted to be with its mother. The modern human baby brought up according to schedule, has its regular hours of sleep and food. A baby calf, which is to be raised for milk, is not allowed to suckle its mother cow, but is taught to drink from a pail. The pail is kept scrupulously clean. The calf is fed at regular intervals, only twice per day. The reason for this is that fresh milk is used directly after milking time, night and morning. The baby calf looked at us with bright eyes, its little mouth and rough tongue all white and milky from its feeding shortly before.

We walked back toward the house. Lush green meadow alternated with dim green woods. The sweet earthy smell of spring hung over everything. Underfoot were starry white blossoms of wild

strawberry, purple bells of violet, and the red and gold trumpets of columbine, which I had never seen grow wild. Still deeper in the evergreen woods, we found pale anemone, lovely arethusa, the tiny orchid, and yellow adders' tongue with its striped leaves. Mary wanted to gather the charming wildings for me, but I asked her to let them live. They looked so happy in their woodsy home.

For the first time I saw that oaks leaf out later than other deciduous trees. The Big Oak was just beginning to unfold its buds in lonely splendor. It was hung with veils upon veils of feathery, indescribably beautiful blue-green. I sat down to rest and "to have my moment of joy", to let it sink in deep. Was there ever anything so gloriously, so magically beautiful, as spring? There was so much to see, that I had not noticed the young apple trees. I had actually not seen them at all. Good heavens! I had completely forgotten my work and the house. Mary had gone back to her work. Never have I done anything harder than to return to setting in order a tumbled house on that rare, early June morning, when every nerve thrilled with desire to explore the woods and the fields.

Our bedroom faced north like the study, but with a sunrise outlook, where the study faced the westering sun. I slept that night in a beautifully comfortable mahogany bed, looked at my tired and dishevelled self in a tall mahogany cheval glass, and thought of the Doctor's exquisite taste and of his

incorrigible extravagance. A song sparrow in the elm, that stretches protecting arms over my east window, awoke me. The sun was rising, pearly, golden and rose, gossamer and green. What had I ever done to deserve all this beauty, this joy? But it was not a question of poetic dreams anent sunrise or other miracles of a spring morning. The question was immediate and practical. There was one more day left to clear the kitchen and to get the dining room ready for dinner and for the Doctor. The colorful sunrise brought rain before noon. The robins knew; they were telling each other all morning that despite the sunshine rain was on the way. Thank heaven, the rain made it easy to stick to the indoor work. The worst was the everlasting presence of workmen, hard as they tried to keep out of our way. And it smelled abominably of paint and varnish.

By the end of the afternoon, we had really accomplished wonders. In the kitchen and the pantry barrels and boxes were still piled high; but there were runways between, as we say of the paths made by foxes and other wild things. John had gone to the station to meet the Doctor. Luckily, it had stopped raining. One of the farm children brought over milk, cream, and eggs. "There's th' train, Missus. When th' wind's saouth, ye kin hear it blow fer V'gennes." What an infinity of facts there were to be learned in the country, points of the compass, winds, weather, what not? These little

boys knew more about real things, vital facts, than I should be able to learn in years. At seven, dinner was ready, the dining room comfy, the table set, lamps were lighted, and I was dressed.

They arrived, the Doctor, Scotty, Delia and Katy. Was I dreaming? It was not the heavy work team that had met me, but a beautiful pair of young bay fillies. Another surprise. The team had been shipped by express on the very train that brought the Doctor. John had known, for he drove up with a neighbor, trailing the surrey, and taking the light double driving harness with him. It had all been carefully planned. "Let me present to you, Lady and Sister, own sisters, coming three and four. Like them?" Like them? I loved them already, beautiful, young sleek things! Our friend of the broken word from Long Island had put the Doctor in the way of buying this pair, also Kentucky thoroughbreds, all on account of his little understanding note.

We had a very gay dinner. Meanwhile Scotty was snuffing and investigating things from cellar to attic. Oh, yes, of course there was an attic. It had the loveliest view of the whole house. From the dining room we watched the afterglow die out in the west. The Doctor inquired where we were to sleep. "If you go on with your extravagance, we'll not be able to buy any more land, ever." "Well, don't you like the bedroom furniture? I may as well tell you right now, that there's some for the

dining room on the way. And I've bought a small pipe organ." "Splendid, the organ is good news!" The Doctor had longed for an organ for many years. "All your things are dead things. I've got live ones to show you to-morrow, a beautiful heifer calf, darling baby chicks. The oats and barley are up in lovely straight rows." He asked about the apple trees. I said I had not looked at them. "There was the sky and the birds and the trees and the flowers and ferns," I began. "Think of the years and years we shall have to see it all. Just wait until I get this house where I want it. Eventually there'll be a north lawn with a spindle balustrade." "What, and spoil the woods!" "No imagination yet! We'll make apple orchards and a park of this farm, and buy a stock farm, where we'll breed horses and cattle and hogs. Here we'll have a race track and a rosegarden for you and——" "Probably end up in the poorhouse, or, as the natives say, be on the town."

We went upstairs at last. The Doctor had not thought that his study would be habitable. I had had the lamps lighted. He was more touched than he was willing to show, when he saw the room looking like home. "How in heaven's name did you and Mary get all this work done in three days?" "I requisitioned one or two of your men." "Good for you. I'll see that we have you fixed up in a few days, so as to make getting about easier, if I have to use a dozen men. Let's try the fireplace."

We did; and it smoked fearfully. To tell the truth, I was glad something had gone wrong, just to know that we were human. We had all the tang of wood-smoke, and more than we desired. It's not as sweet indoors as under God's open sky. "Let's put out the lights and get the view from all the windows on this floor." It was a starry night, luminous, yet veiled; still, so still, that we heard the splash of oars, although no boat was in sight. Split Rock Light burned steadily, brightly, like the eye of friendship watching the night. Home lights twinkled on the Essex shore. Beyond, far beyond, painted into hazy distance, hung the Adirondack hills, everlasting, mysterious. All about were shadowy trees hedged in by winged silence and the poignant fragrance and promise of June.

CHAPTER TEN

APPRENTICESHIP, ARTESIAN WELLS AND MANY OTHER THINGS

THE Doctor got into his camp clothes, and cleaned his favorite pipe. It was the last touch of home. Somehow a man's man looks his best in pioneer dress, gray flannel shirt and all the rest of it, smoking a pipe, not a cigar nor a cigarette. During the three days of my presence, the workmen had seemed fairly busy. Directly the Doctor arrived, things began to hum. Teams and men were put at clearing away stone, mortar, lumber on every side, using all this waste material to fill up the deep holes surrounding house and grounds. The porches could not be used, owing to unfinished floors. The kitchen yard and porch, where the cement was dry and hard, was cleaned, giving us one entrance, at least, where one was not in constant fear of breaking one's back and legs.

I asked one of the carpenters, a little French Canadian, to do some work for me in the pantry. "Ma'am, dose hired girls an' be in dar," he said, questioningly. I looked at him for an explanation, as we were accustomed to great willingness on the part of our men. He took off his cap to speak to

me, an unusual thing, by the way. Most of the workers performed this act of courtesy only indoors. "Ma'am, please, I do annyting you say, for you, but I no can work wit' dose girls." I wondered what on earth could have happened. He went on. "Ef dere is woman wit' our good God, I no want his heaven, me." Later, I heard what had made a Schopenhauer of the little Canadian. He had been married to a virago of a wife, twice his size in body and mind. He had left her years before, and had been afraid of all things feminine ever since. Our maids were much amused, and kept industriously out of the poor little man's way.

Every last bit of rubbish was hauled away to fill yawning holes that clamored for more and more. Every barrel, crate, and box was opened for us. We unpacked all things from table linen and books to rice and matches. By another week cupboards and shelves were clean, and things had found their abiding places. Windows shone, white shades and curtains were hung, pictures were on the pure white walls that as yet could not be papered or painted. It was easy to achieve decorative effect with a background of perfectly-proportioned space, with beautiful chimney breasts, with every window framing a picture and all the brilliant color and light. It just seemed to come of itself.

The dining room furniture had arrived. The Doctor had chosen the pieces with our old round mahogany table and its many wide leaves in mind.

It had the same simple lines. It was perfect. The organ, too, had come. When we took it out of its crate, we found the pedals jammed, the keyboard out of kilter, and internal injuries. I almost wept. The Doctor immediately made an adventure out of this unfortunate happening. "Never mind; some stormy day I'll take the thing apart and fix it up. I always longed to see the inside of an organ." This consoling speech had an ominous sound. I had had experience with his taking things apart and putting them together again. The taking apart was done when the spirit moved him, and the putting together in the same wise, with frequently a long interval between. At such times, we were accustomed to see signs something like this. "Do not clean or dust this room until I'm through." Or, "Don't move anything in this place."

Of all things in our house, I liked the woodwork most of all. It was so admirably simple and so creamy white. Chimney breasts, doors, windows, all were finished with the lovely drop trimming, that in England they call Georgian. We have adapted it and call it Colonial, and it is really Greek. Of course, the woodwork had received only a priming coat. This creamy color with the alabaster white of the walls and the ceilings, was very attractive. I said I liked it. "Wait until we have dull gold on the drawing room walls and tapestry paper in the dining room, and gray and pink in our room, and soft greens and browns everywhere else"— "Do

you suppose, you will ever get through with your house?" I asked. "Don't wish it. We cannot build another house. I shall have to get into mischief, merely to keep sufficiently busy and to get a new sensation."

The Doctor insisted on our being outdoors a part of each day. He looked after the farm, the stock, meadows, trees, pastures. He found that John was not trustworthy, and had to be dismissed. I was sorry to lose Lina and the children. We soon found a new farm family, although we made a number of changes before the right people came to us. We hired two men to work by the month and to live at our farmhouse. At that time, board and lodging and twenty-five dollars per month was good wages. To-day a boy would earn more and be able to save less. The hired men were old Ben Bailey and a friend of his, Jim Graves. The latter was as good a worker as Ben. Like Ben, he was experienced in all farmwork and farm lore. He was a staunch believer in the great Republican party, in ghosts, and in hard cider, particularly the latter.

The first thing the two men did was to make our garden. We were very late about this work and could only plant a small number of vegetables. We had decided that this year we must see the whole thing from the beginning. We had already chosen about half an acre north of the young orchard. The land, fortunately, had been ploughed both in fall and in spring, as every good garden should be. It

was protected from the north by evergreen woods, and lay along a little slope. We had it harrowed and harrowed and harrowed again, pulverizing the dirt as much as possible before putting in the seed. This makes the seed bed, as it is called. I did enjoy watching the harrow discs rubbing against each other like great iron hands, fining the clods and lumps of earth. After the wheel harrows had done the coarse part of the work, came a spike tooth harrow. This is a big, square tool of iron and steel, set with great spikes. It is drawn by two horses, with the man walking behind. The other harrows have seats for the worker. This last harrow smoothes the dirt and makes a soft, fine bed for the little seeds to rest and to get strength to sprout their tiny wings. Small furrows were measured out in long, straight rows, in order to be able to cultivate easily and quickly. Into each furrow fertilizer was scattered thinly, evenly mixed with the dirt. The two men watered our late garden morning and night, before the sun was hot and after sunset.

There came a two-days rain storm, still, gray, beautiful. Then came Sunday, blessed day of rest with no men about, no sound but the birds, the wind, and the water. The Doctor and I walked through the rain-washed woods, with sunlight iridescence on every glistening leaf. From the green dusk of the sun-dappled trees we came out into the shining, sun-drenched orchard, and lo, our garden was up in narrow rows of soft green. Our seeds had grown

their tiny wings, had pushed apart their graves of earth, had reached the light of day. We knelt down and looked close to see. What we saw was a row of little green things like crooked green fingers. All plants break through the crust of earth in this position, the Doctor explained to me. In this way, it is easier for them to push. As they reach the light, they slowly straighten to worship the sun, and spread their two wings. Many times since that Sunday morning in spring, I have sat in my greenhouse and watched the crooked fingers straighten up till their tiny heads point up to the sun. In their small way they rival the stained-glass windows of a Gothic church pointing up to heaven.

Ben and Jim were setting out with their fishing gear. "If we hev' anny luck, we'll bring ye an' the Missus a big pike, Doc'," called old Ben, as they went by.

We walked up to the end of our land on the south, where it adjoined the estate of Mr. Walter Scranton, with whose family we had recently become acquainted. Dear Mrs. Scranton! She has long since joined her fathers. Sweet of face and manner, she was a type of old-fashioned lady in whose presence one instinctively felt at ease. A type, unfortunately, that we are outgrowing fast, in this age of suffrage and of equal standards, of Margot Asquith and Madeleine Marx.

We climbed a fence, and found ourselves in a ledgy pasture, over-grown with brambles and bitter-

sweet, with old maples and oaks and dozens of butternut trees loaded with nuts in their sticky green hulls. It is strange how the butternuts love to have their roots in clefts of rock. All the ledges were filled with holes of queer formation. Action of water, the Doctor told me, hundreds of centuries gone, when all this Champlain valley was ocean bed. We sat down to rest on the top of a hill under the shade of one of the big, wind-broken butternuts. The view was beautiful that bright, still, midsummer day, a day that could have been nothing else but Sunday. Below us, the sun glittered on the lake. All about were hills with luminous clouds in their hair. As far as we could see, were green woods, cultivated paler green fields. Hark, church bells on the wings of the wind. It must be at Vergennes, I thought. It was intensely quiet.

The following week the Doctor started Ben and Jim at the young apple trees. They began by cultivating, that is, loosening and making friable the earth about their roots. Digging for borers came next. Borers are soft-bodied white caterpillars with saw-toothed heads. They burrow into the heartwood of young fruit trees, deposit their eggs, and rear their larvæ, sucking the lifeblood and literally sawing in two the little tree. There is danger to the apple trees from borers for a number of years. For this reason, one must dig them out twice during each growing season, in June and in August. A hole is cut in the bark, a long wire is bent into a hook at

the end. The hook is inserted into the tree, the borer is impaled on it, and thus drawn out. It is easy to see the borers' work. For at the foot of the tree is fine, powdery sawdust. I have seen as many as seven or more borers dug out of one poor little tree. Sometimes if succor comes too late the tree is doomed. Apple trees have a hard time getting to maturity, or perhaps, one should say that the grower has a harder time bringing them through their various times of stress. There are surprisingly many such times, and we became intimately acquainted with most, all in the day's work of farming.

I liked to watch the men at their work. Both Ben and Jim were beyond middle age, with furrowed faces and bent backs, with the strange manner of walk acquired from much ploughing. Both had kindly, twinkling blue eyes. Both liked to talk. There had been some trouble with the windmill. In this way we came to talk about wells and well digging. "Ye ever hearn tell abaout th' way ye looks t' fin' water?" Of course, I had not. "Wall, ye take a willer er a witch hazel rod, an' ye walk along an' think o' nothin', an' when thet willer turns in yer hand, 'thaout yer doin' nothin' t' make it, thet's th' place t' dig fer water. An' ye'll fin' it, sur's th' world," said old Ben. "Sure, thet's so," from Jim, "sure ez we're a goin' t' git rain t' morrer. Look et them sundogs." My education was progressing almost faster than I could follow. Willow wands of magic, sundogs and rain. I had

enough for one afternoon, and left the men to their borers. I hugged myself, hoping I had found out something to tell the Doctor, which he did not know. He had read of some such thing, as usual. "You do not believe any such weird tale, do you?" "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." And I did not know what he believed.

Soon after this, came one Williams, digger of artesian wells. Quite seriously, he told the wonder tale of the willow, and offered to show us. The Doctor wanted his well as near to the farmhouse as possible. Williams cut his magic wand and we watched him walking slowly from the barn, across the road, around and over to the farmhouse, and all about in many directions. He did this twice over, and marked the place, unknown to either of us, where the willow branch had turned in his hand. The Doctor repeated the performance. I wondered just what he was thinking of; probably about some defective child in whose development he was interested. Suddenly he stood still, to the southeast of the house, where the workshop now stands. I held my breath. "Thet's th' place," from Williams. Our well is within two feet of that identical spot. It was sunk during the late autumn and winter, after our return to New York. I remember distinctly when the telegram came announcing that water had been reached. "Sights of it." There are things——

"After our barns get done, if they ever do, we must have a workshop with an anvil and a forge, and a grindstone and every possible tool to repair and to make things we need on the place. I'll connect everything up with the gasolene engine, that will pump the water out of our Artesian well. We'll have all sorts of saws and wrenches, pipe threading tools and bolt cutters, and"—his eyes sparkled. "And the neighbors will come in and we'll help each other do things on rainy days and swap stories.

"Let's go for a swim, and see how they are getting on with the dock." They were getting on, I suppose. Just then they were dumping stone and stone and more stone between the great cross beams anchored to the shelving rocks. A retaining wall of cement had been built, a type of breakwater to keep the ice and storms of winter from damaging dock and trees. The Doctor himself was now directing the twenty or more men at work on the place. We no longer needed a contractor. He enjoyed it tremendously, the creative, the executive part of it. So did the workers. I marveled where on earth he had picked up his accurate knowledge of lumber, cement, tools, and a hundred more things.

The men were very fond of him. For instance, a mason did some particularly stupid, aggravating thing at the end of a dull, hot day in late August. One of the days on which everything seems to go wrong. The Doctor spoke to him very sharply in-

deed, a rare thing. So much so, that I wanted to make up for it, and told the man how much unpleasantness the day had brought. "Oh, Missus, we like turrible t' hear th' Doc' talk. I tol' him it wuz too bad I done wut I done. An' th' Doc', he said: 'We all got t' cuss oncet in a whil', an't we, son?' " I determined not to waste my sympathy in just that way again.

Our garden was a success despite the late planting. We had most delicious lettuce, peas, beans, carrots, beets, and corn. Vegetables should be gathered for a meal just in time for cooking to have the best flavor. The sun and the rain and the dew and the stars, there is something of all these in their indescribable quality, akin to the luscious sweetness of wild strawberries and raspberries and black caps.

The maids too, had a happy time. They wished they might stay at the farm forever, until late September, when there were few men about and the evenings grew long and too cool to be out of doors or on the lake. The Doctor had bought a boat for farm use. The maids had the use of it, and the hired men, without asking special leave. We had our own skiff and the canoe. The Doctor had taught me many years before that hired help, to be content and efficient, must have a certain independence. "We are all equal in our several stations, if we do our duty." His theory worked out surprisingly well in most cases.

"Want to come and see the columns go up?" he

asked me one Saturday. The columns were to give the final touch of "Colonialism," so to speak, on the outside of the Stone House. We had a hard time to make the natives, telephone girls, and, in fact, anyone say Stone House, not Mansion, as they were accustomed to speak of the master's house hereabout. This master did not like the pretense of mansion. At each repetition of "mansion," he said: "No, the Stone House." In the end, he conquered, and Stone House it has remained to this day.

The poor columns! They looked so depressed lying in a long row, held up by boards placed under them; lying in a horizontal position when they wanted to stand and hold up a roof. The Doctor directed the men and helped at a pinch; the men lifted, and I watched, assisted in my watching by Scotty. One after the other, the columns went up. First came the portico at the south, or drive entrance. Then came the turn of the two big porches at the sunrise and sunset ends of the house. Up to now cedar posts had stayed the roofs, quite efficiently, it is true, but without pride or beauty. The pure white columns looked splendid, as each in turn was raised from its ignominious place on the ground, and stood up straight, tall, slender, like a silver birch in evergreen woods. The work was finally over. The men had gone home. Peace fell upon us with the dusk.

After dark, with a myriad stars tangled in the

tree tops, we went out to look at our house with its guardian columns in place at last. It was beautiful. Although so new in truth, it was old in seeming. It melted into the surrounding landscape, like the old Winans house we admired so long ago on the evening we first saw the lake. Nothing jarred, nothing stood out, as if it did not belong. Satisfying like the melodic resolution of an intricate chord, it was a harmony of gray and green and white. Over it all hung the eternal canopy of night and stars, beyond the beauty of man's making.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ADVENTURES IN CLOUD AND RAIN, UNDER SUN AND MOON

IT was raining. "Just the right sort of day to take apart the organ and to fix up its woe-begone innards," said the Doctor on returning from his inspection of the farm and the men. An organ is a fearful and a wonderful thing, judging from the looks of hall and study and an over-flow in the south room when I came upstairs an hour or two later. Bolts and screws, parts of metal, parts of wood, wide strips and narrow strips, and a hundred more, of all shapes and sizes lay about. All were duly marked and placed in certain unmistakable positions. The Doctor stood in the midst of it, sleeves rolled up, screw driver in hand, whistling gayly, the air filled with blue haze from the pipe evidently just laid down. "I'm satisfied that a pipe organ, even this miniature one, has more parts than the most antediluvian Ichthyosaurus ever invented. You won't want to clean up around here, will you?"

This conversation having taken place some two or three dozen times before, in the course of our various adventures, I said: "Oh, no, not to-day. When do you expect to get through?" "The gods

only know, I don't." This too, had a familiar ring. "It's all marked, so who cares, anyway. Dinner's been ready for an hour or more? Spoilt almost? I'll be ready in two minutes. Let's have some music after dinner." After a week or two we were again able to walk through the hall without fear of doing something to some part of that blessed organ. It was taken to pieces several times, and in the end worked beautifully, and had a splendid tone, although, strange as it may seem, there were three parts which would not go back, no matter how hard the Doctor tried to find some place where they belonged. A year or so later, when we bought our big pipe organ, Mason and Hamlin sent up a man to install it. The Doctor gave the small organ to a Settlement House in which he was interested. The organ expert looked it over minutely, to find where the offending parts belonged. He found an abiding place for all but one, and that evidently must have been part of the house, for even the expert could not place it inside the instrument or out.

After dinner we had our music. The Doctor accompanied beautifully, when he confined himself to the composer and to the composition. But he was inordinately fond of improvising, which is hard for an ordinary mortal to follow in ensemble unless one is a mind reader. He could not see it from my point of view at all. "If two people are in sympathy——"

Later we drove to Ferrisburgh, the Centre; for

there is a Centre, an East, a West, and a North. The Centre and the North are jealous of each other, for some unexplained, ancient reason. At the station, which is at the same time the express office, we found our strawberry plants, asparagus and rhubarb roots, our currant and raspberry bushes. All were carefully packed in burlap wrappings. They came from the nursery of Frederick Horsford, in Charlotte, a town north of us, between Ferrisburgh and Burlington, on the Rutland Road. It is pronounced not like the girl's name, but like the Lady of Shalott. I have always expected something romantic from a town with so romantic a name, but apart from Mr. Horsford's splendid perennials, I have never been able to find any reason why it should not be called Bridget, or something equally prosaic.

We drove in the Surrey, not anticipating the size of the express packages. Coming back, we had to leave the seats with the station agent, Charlie Tupper, whose widow now runs our station and express business. We sat ignominiously on our precious, burlap-wrapped plants. The only one of the party who did not like this democratic procedure, was Scotty. He objected strenuously. Lady and Sister splashed happily along through the clay mud. It was amusing to see them come close to an old stump fence along the meadow of Mr. Charles Chapman, a neighbor of ours. In the country we are neighbors, even if there are two or three miles between

us. In later years we came to know the Chapman family intimately. "Mother"—Mr. Chapman always calls his wife, and in truth, he could not call her anything more fitting. She is a gentlewoman, placid, sweet-mannered, self-sacrificing, motherly. She is the type of woman who makes one feel, that, after all, life is pure, worthwhile, beautiful.

In their short Kentucky life, Lady and Sister had never come across anything even faintly resembling a stump fence. They showed it plainly. I did not like their maner of showing fear and disdain nearly as much as the Doctor. Our picturesque stump fences date back to pioneer times in old New England, when the land was cleared of great pines and cedars, the stumps painstakingly dug out and used to fence off the land. It was bad agriculture, without doubt. It made hiding places for noxious weeds and insect pests. Good, clean, scientific husbandry of to-day has wire fences. But how much beauty there was in the old, careless ways.

For instance, a side hill is covered with soft, coppery sorrel. A beautiful sight, but sorrel is the sign of acidity in the soil. The decorative side hill must be ploughed and limed. Its beauty is irretrievably lost in efficiency. Farms must be fenced with well set-in posts and woven wire, simple, clean, efficient. But how hopelessly ugly this is compared with old mossy stone walls covered with wild, trailing things. Or soft, gray split-rail fences that are overhung with green things of climbing, clinging

habit. Most beautiful, most picturesque of all are the stump fences, that look like strange, uncouth, giant devil-fish things. Look at one closely. The outside texture of the wood is a soft green-gray, covered with patches of silvery lichen. The inner wood is a charming pomegranate pink, satiny, odorous. And when their usefulness as landmarks is ended, they make delightfully crackly, fragrant fires. Dear old stumps! I have always been sorry to see them go in the wake of modern progress.

We got our plants safely home, and had them put in the farmhouse cellar for the night, where it was dark and cool. The rain was over. Red-gold bars of sunset light streaked woods and hills as we drove up to our south entrance, or rather, as we splashed up to our south entrance. "Soon as these perennial garden things are safely planted, I am going to start blazing trees for our drive. Want to help?" Did I? He then went on to explain that he intended to make the drive just as winding as he possibly could. "We'll have gateposts to the southwest of the farmhouse and start the drive from there. I'll make gateposts of concrete, covered with five-leaved ampelopsis, the same climber that you want on the Stone House. It turns to crimson flame in autumn, remember? From the gateposts through the ravine our drive will be straight." "Through the ravine?" I did not understand. "Yes, the ravine. I have been poking around and with a very little blasting we can make

a sort of Pass of Thermopylæ entrance to the Stone House drive. This will separate completely the farm from our home grounds." "What about the woods?" "I'll make that drive wind in and out between fine big oaks and maples, and beeches and elms, not to speak of great birches and cedars. Most of them you have never seen. Naturally we shall have to cut hundreds of trees. The woods will be the better for the thinning out. They are so tangled, that many trees do not thrive from want of light and air. There will be much stone needed, all the remnants of the blasting, and a lot more. Eventually we'll have a sand and gravel drive. But that's a long way off."

The Doctor left the planting of the perennials to me. "Yours are the apple trees and the gardens. Make what you please of them. By the way, I have the place all picked out for your rose garden. Show you to-morrow. No, to-night, there'll be a moon."

The next morning, Jim and Ben reported to me. They had already prepared the ground for our berry plants. Well-rotted horse manure had been spaded in plentifully. It was the last week of August, after a day's rain, a clouded morning, altogether ideal setting-out time. Just to undo the burlap bundles with their precious contents was exciting. First came the strawberry plants, one hundred of them. They were the most perishable. Ben showed me how to take off dead or rotted

leaves and any weeds that were in the earth around the plants. Jim made small holes with his hoe, three feet apart, in long straight rows. Into each hole I poured water, as much as it would absorb, so that the little roots might find nourishment to tide them over their rude transplanting. Ben set the plants, spread out their rootlets, and firmed the dirt around them compactly. Over each plant we put two shingles set up against each other, like an Indian tepee, so that the hot sun would not wilt the baby plant before it felt settled in its new home. When we had the hundred plants in place, the effect was very business-like.

Next came the asparagus, of which there were one hundred three-year old plants. They are queer-looking things, like huge, fat spiders. For these, holes three feet were dug. An asparagus bed is a permanent thing, yielding plentifully for thirty or more years, if properly cultivated and cared for. "Guess we'd ought t' git some o' thet black muck outen th' Slang, t' put in wi' them plants." So I sent Jim to hitch up one of the work horses to the dump cart and go for a load of the rich silt in the marsh, near the Slang Bridge. We covered the asparagus roots carefully with wetted burlap, so that they should not dry out. Meanwhile we measured for the currant bushes along the drive. "My," said old Ben, "it'll be pretty when them currants git t' bearin'. Th'll be sights on em." Ben was a very optimistic person, always expecting big fish, splendid harvests,

and fine weather, if he could possibly find the least reason for so believing. This was a notable thing. As a rule, we found the natives pessimism personified. No matter what happened, it was cause for thinking the worst. Perhaps it is human to believe in fatality, when one's livelihood, one's very life is dependent in such great measure upon the unforeseen, as is the farmer's.

We set each currant bush four feet from its neighbor to give room for the bushes to grow. At maturity, set in this wise, they would make a continuous hedge of rich green, at bearing time hung with scarlet berries. There would be enough for the Stone House, for our farm family, and some for the robins. As before, we dug a deep hole, so that the roots could spread out comfortably in their bed. We mixed fertilizer with the earth, poured in water generously and planted the seedling. The long row of slender canes stood up bravely. Jim got back at noon with his load of rich black dirt from the marsh. "Gosh," he said, "this here stuff's richer'n a gol' mine. Erie's feelin' good, most a dumped me an' th' cart daown int' th' Slang." Erie and Pa were the second work team the Doctor had bought. They were Percheron bred. They came, as their names implied, from Erie, Pennsylvania.

When I returned after luncheon, dinner, as our neighbors call it, the two men had a row of holes ready for my asparagus roots. They were set in deep, and covered up, so that nothing showed but

a circular mound of loose-looking earth marked with a stake. "Naow, we'll giv' 'em a dose o' coarse salt, so's t' keep daown th' weeds." This seemed a queer thing. The majority of plants are killed by salt. The roots of asparagus are deeper below the surface than most, and the plant above ground is cut, as it develops.

Next came six plants of rhubarb, another perennial, set in the southerly end of our garden. Pie plant, Vermonters call it, is by nature a swamp growth, loves moisture, and is a rank feeder. It needs all the richness it can get to thrive. Last of all, we set out the raspberry canes. They looked much like the currant seedlings. Of these we planted three rows in a line with the young apple trees, thereby separating our garden into oblong plots. By chore time, five o'clock, our work was done. "They certainly ought to do well, we have taken so much trouble with our planting," I said to the men. "Gosh," answered Jim, "don't see's why th' hadn't ought ter, with thet black muck an' all. Thet's bettern all yer boughten stuff annyways."

The Doctor, meanwhile, had been blazing trees for his drive. He was tremendously elated about it, and said before he got through with it, it was going to be a wonder of a drive. And he had some news. He had bought a thirty-acre meadow from Mr. Scranton. It included the ledge pasture with the butternut trees and the beautiful view. The

new purchase adjoined our land on the south. "Think of it, Mr. Scranton had never seen that ledge until I took him there." I asked what he intended doing with the thirty acres. "Apple trees, apple trees."

At night, by moonlight he took me out to the "rose garden." What he showed me was a thicket of big cedars and pine and silver birch within sight and sound of the lake. "Here," I asked, "in the woods?" "Out there will be a turn in our drive," out there being just then deep black, shadowy trees, bright-streaked with moon rays. "Where we stand, will be the center of your garden. Want a sun dial?" It was too wonderful. "Many of these trees, of course, must be felled," the Doctor continued. "We'll leave this one silver birch for contrast. These splendid arbor vitæ will make a natural wall and windbreak, on all but the south side, which will be open. I'll make a clearing there, and plant a small orchard. In this way your rose garden will be sunny and protected, walled in by trees, in the midst of evergreen woods. Beyond the trees is the lake, so that you may hear its music while you work among your roses, yet they will be guarded from every harsh wind. We'll plant a hedge of old-timey natives for a screen between the drive and your garden. I'd prefer the cinnamon rose, the many-leaved, fragrant little pink rose of our grandmothers' time. I shall do it for you, 'soon 's I can get around to it,' as our

neighbors hereabout would say." For the man of dreams, it was a reality. He visualized things so clearly. For me there were mysterious, night-black shadows. There was bright, silver-blue moonlight, with somewhere, sometime, in a dim, hazy future, the fragrance of roses.

The dock was practically finished. Crushed stone had been put on top of the big anchor stones. This was in turn covered with rough concrete. It looked as if it had grown onto the rocks, as if it had always been there, like the Stone House in its green and gray setting. "Next summer we'll get a new launch and build a boathouse to keep it under cover." No, he would never finish. It was certain.

The men who had been working on the dock, were now put to work on the drive. They cut down trees, blazed by the Doctor. When a certain number were felled, they were hauled over to the woodpile, at the edge of the cedar woods to the north of our farmhouse. The brush was burned in the woods. After two or three days, I began at last to see, and to remember Mr. Platt's lovely water color showing the Stone House set in lawns with a turn-around and a drive. The Doctor spent the greater part of several weeks right with the men, for fear of losing even a single fine tree. Then too, as each clearing came into being, it opened new vistas. Here was creative work he loved; and always he had the fragrant smell of

the conifers, the radiant sun and sky of September, the sound of the wind in the trees, the murmur of the lake.

It was strangely interesting to see the various turns of the drive emerge slowly out of the evergreen wilderness. All this, remember, was deep woods, a good deal of it was virgin woods with brambles, creepers, vines of every description, forest growth in tangly thickets. The very thought of making a path, curved or straight, seemed wonderful. To think of blazing a wide carriage drive through this wild tangle of green, truly required imagination, vision.

They came upon partridge and quail, upon ground birds and screech owls. I was sorry for the wild things disturbed and hunted from their homes. "No matter," he said. "It is not their mating season. They will all remain near, only they will go deeper into the woods, up the trail, beyond the ravine, where you have never been. I'll take you there sometime. It is the wildest, the the most beautiful part of our farm. Somewhere, along there, above and close to the lake shore, there was once an old Indian trail." They came upon sapphire-blue closed gentians, upon the lovely fringed orchis with its apple blossom hues, upon rattlesnake plaintain with its striped leaves, upon thick mats of partridge vine and its scarlet berries, upon clumps of fern, and more charming wildings. The Doctor protected every mossy rock, every

tiniest flower, that could be saved. I do not think I ever saw him so happy except, perhaps, when a problem case among his patients became clear to him: as he expressed it, "when he got the combination." Or, yes, years later, when he drove Madge Wildfire in a race and won it.

"Gosh darn it, Doc', caint see what in hell ye want this here road o' yourn so gosh blamed crooked fer. Looks t' me julluk a road made outen a keg o' hard cider." To which the Doctor answered, that possibly the crooked road would some day lead the way to a keg of something hot.

We never mentioned going home to New York, although it was in both our minds constantly. The time was drawing near. Our grain was stacked in the meadows. Our corn was cut, and stood in great, yellowish-green stooks, looking for all the world like a village of Indian wigwams. Our Northern Spys and Baldwins were beginning to burnish their cheeks. Maples and beeches were touched with Loki's staff of fire. There was a tang of autumn in the bright air. There were noticeably few bird voices in the woods and about the house. Duck hunting season had opened.

One night toward the end of September we went spearing. It was my first experience with this type of fishing. Ben was an expert fisherman. He knew the ins and outs of the lake and the marshes, knew the haunts of pike and pickerel and muscallonge. We waited until night fell. A gasolene torch was

attached to the bow of our flat-bottomed fishing boat. It threw into weird relief trees and rocks, shore line and water. I sat in the middle of the boat with Scotty, at our accustomed passive job of watching. Ben poled the boat slowly, very slowly in and out of bays and inlets, hugging closely the tree-fringed shore. The Doctor and Jim stood at each end with a three-pronged spear on a long pole, like Neptune's trident, grasped tightly. The night was star-lit, still. The wind barely rippled the crystal-clear water. In the shallow bays, the lake bottom was clearly visible; one moment brilliantly lighted by our torch, the next, in deep, mysterious darkness. There was something uncanny in the black aloofness of the murmuring, gurgling water, the lurid light of the torch, the strange, shifting shadows. Here, we saw pebbly bottom with fish of all sorts quiescent, or in quick-gliding motion, as they sensed the paddle, noiselessly as Ben used it, or when they saw the light. There, was pure white sand with soft-water clams slowly closing and unclosing their housing shell.

At last! Jim jabbed his prongs into a huge, snaky eel and dropped him squirming into a pail behind him. His mate glided away, swimming quickly. Eels usually lie on the lake bottom in pairs. "Pike, Doc', a big un, ahead o' ye there. Gosh, he's got 'way fr'm ye! No, good fer ye, ye got 'im." The Doctor did not speak, as the big fish splashed into the pail, but he took out his clasp

knife and put the struggling, gasping creature out of its misery. We paddled gradually up to Little Otter Creek, and were soon on the sand bar south and west of Gardiner's Island, just at the edge of the reedy weeds. We got both pike and pickerel and more eels. It is fairly exciting sport, but like duck hunting for the Doctor and me, it was the high lights and magic shadows, the colorful stillness, the beauty of the spangled sky, the dim, sleeping trees we loved. All these things meant infinitely more to us than the spearing. The marsh, particularly, was magically beautiful, like a stage setting for some Oriental love scene in a starry wilderness. It is strange that the most subtly moving things in nature remind one of beauty in art, its counterfeit. The men docked our boat, and led the way with our string of fish, threaded on a forked stick. They held up the torch to light us through the black night of the pines. It was very late.

"Let's watch the moonrise. Play something. Oh, 'Tristan.'" I did. Silver rays lit up the dimness of the room, and brought into cameo relief the ivory and black keyboard. "Come on, your Tristan is an anemic creature in that third act. Here is your moon, that's something like." A wide path of lustrous moonlight divided into two our star-lit bay. It showed in crystal-clear relief black shadow and silver light, triumphant keys of nature on which God makes the music of the spheres.

CHAPTER TWELVE

A NEW YEAR'S VISIT AT THE FARM AND NEIGHBORS

HOW we hated to close the Stone House the last day of September! "Never mind," said the Doctor, "some day we shall see this gorgeous scarlet and gold turn to soft browns and yellows, shall see the year's fulfillment, the harvest's end, the coming of snow and winter silence. We'll get it all. There's nothing like having things left to wish for."

Reports came weekly. On the whole, they were satisfactory. At Christmas we received a unique gift from a patient and friend of ours, Mrs. De Mauriac, who had a farm at Allendale, New Jersey. She sent us a pair of pure-bred Chester White shoats. Nothing could have pleased us better. The piggies were sent up to the farm with minute directions for their care.

New Year's day happened on a Sunday. In our country of the free, that means an extra holiday. We determined to go up to the lake for the two days, and have a lark. We found fires burning, and the Stone House comfortably warm. We made a huge driftwood fire in the drawing room. I got

Frozen Spindrift.

our meals in the kitchen, and served the first one in the dining room. "Anything the matter with the kitchen?" asked the Doctor. "Why not eat right there? It will be like a picnic, and besides it will be so much easier for you. Between you and me, it's a comfort to have no maids around for once." The kitchen was nice. I had taken great pride in furnishing it with curtained windows and cupboards, with a long white dresser, on which stood old-blue china cereal jars in orderly rows. Its windows looked out over the ice-bound lake, the green snow-topped hills, the green, snow-filled woods. It was flooded with sunshine. A kitchen is a homey place. No matter how much we may want formal living for general purposes, coming down to elemental things occasionally is a change and a relief. Deep down in my heart, I was glad to show off my domestic ability to the Doctor, who said nothing, but saw every last little thing.

It was fun wading through deep, dry, powdery snow. It was fun feeding suet and crumbs to the chickadees and the snow buntings. It was fun going through barns and feeding apples to horses and to hens. I never could find anything that cows seemed to relish outside of feeding time. Everything was joyous in the glittery bright-blue air. Lady and Sister were delighted to see us and whinnied happily. They had both been bred during the early summer to a trotting stallion of excellent lineage, Major Axtell. If all went well, early June would

bring their colts. Think of it! The pasture we had dreamed of so long ago, was ours. We too would soon have mother mares with suckling baby colts, grazing in a grassy field surrounded by blue hills, like Will Kimball's at Basin Harbour!

We found all our stock in good condition, only Pa seemed listless, as if he did not care whether school kept or not. Erie, his mate, was in fine mettle. "Guess, I was taken in on that deal," said the Doctor. "Pa is fairly aged." Horse deals are curious things. The buyer beware. Honesty is little considered, even between otherwise good friends. David Harum understood this when he said "we're all fairly good liars when it comes to what we don't tell about a horse."

We went to the hog pen to see our Chester Whites in their new home. Judging from the way they ate their food, they felt acclimatized in their present environment. They had a pen with a concrete trough at one end, near a window, and a clean bed of straw at the farthest end toward the wall. Hogs are much maligned beasts. If given clean straw to sleep on, unlike most other animals, they will never soil it. They like filth no better than most. They are happiest and thrive and grow infinitely better in airy quarters kept decently clean, with a yard for exercise and for air. Sometime, the Doctor told me, he intended to have a large number of hogs, and to let them graze in the open. He explained that hogs do better on range, make quicker and

therefore cheaper gain in flesh than they do when the expense of housing is added to that of feeding with grain exclusively. If reared under cover, hogs must be kept clean and fed with carefully wetted food, rather than with table refuse. The latter is excellent for hens, if kept sweet. Hogs thrive on ground grain, barley, or white middlings and skim milk. White middlings is one of the by-products of wheat, the most wonderful of all grains.

We say wheat unthinkingly, yet about wheat there is romance and story before it ever reaches grain elevators and the romance and the adventure of big business. Wheat stands for so many things. To begin with, there is the little, hard seed. At harvest time it has developed into a plant of grace and beauty. The cycle goes on to its fulfillment of fine flour and coarse, of middlings and bran. Besides these four products gained from the head, there is the golden straw made by the stalks of the wheat plant. All these wondrous things for the preservation of human life and growth sprung from tiny, hard seeds laid into black earth and fostered by sun and rain and wind and dew. In truth, seeds are winged things, are God-given things.

"Let's go for a sleigh ride in the new cutter, stop in to greet the Chapmans, and make our long-promised call on the Robinsons." Splendid! The roads were hard-packed, making the finest kind of sleighing. It was a perfect winter day, without wind.

Lady and Sister pranced and pirouetted. It took some driving to hold them down to earth. They too felt the exhilaration of the radiant sky and the crystal-pure snow air. There is a tonic sort of happiness in a sunny winter day. There are no grays, no half-tones. The unsullied snow covers everything sordid. Things stand out strangely clear with sharply marked outlines etched in black and white, in blue and gold. Snow-laden evergreens seem more intimate than they are in their summer dress of green aloofness. The hills, too, in the blue haze of summer, seem far away. In the winter landscape, they draw magically close and enfold the snow-covered valley with protecting nearness. What a glorious day! "Like it, happy?" the Doctor asked. Just then I was too happy to speak.

We reached the bridge over the Slang. How different the marsh seems in winter. Its manifold green has turned into snow-frosted, blue-white ice, brown willow-fringed shore, dull yellow muskrat houses among frozen, deeper yellow reeds. The muskrat houses are made of reeds and rushes, and are cleverly built to float with the flow of the stream. So often I have heard city dwellers speak of the dreariness, the deadness of things of the country in winter. Dreariness, deadness! With such intoxicating air, such magic of color! Color, ranging from the pale yellows of the rushes to the red browns of the willows and the swamp maples; from the cold, deep blue of the ice to the warm, rosy lilac

of distance. Over all this is hung the brilliant, dazzling sun and sky. It looks like a German Christmas card, all a-glitter. We just flew along, bells jingling, horses tossing their heads, snow flying all about us. Ahead of us was the turn in the road, marked by one of our dear old pre-Revolutionary red schoolhouses. It looked homey and old-fashioned with its bright red bricks, its green-shuttered, small-paned windows, and its great woodpile of white and yellow birch. We arrived at the Chapmans, and were welcomed with their usual hospitality. We were asked to stay to tea, but we knew we should never see the Robinsons, if we got out at all. We drove on past the windbreak of great spruce which Mr. Chapman has planted along the side hill beyond his land, on through the hollow with the Little Otter in the distance, and the Green Mountains beyond. Camel's Hump and Mount Mansfield stood out clear and black against the sparkling winter sky. We drove across the railroad track, down the hill and over the old bridge. Far below us the stream, wrapped in ice and snow, was in its winter sleep. In spring it would awake and be a torrent, rushing noisily over tumbled rocks. The beautiful falls on our right were silent, frozen spindrift.

Now we were come to the cross roads at the Centre, with the railroad station at our left. At the corner was the blacksmith shop of Albert Le Grand, an excitable little Frenchman, fond of music,

always cheerful, a lover of horses and of jokes. He is a good blacksmith, and he makes a well-fitting shoe. His hammer rings melodiously as he shapes the red-glowing shoe for my mare; at the same time he discusses the comparative merits of the Mozart and the Verdi Requiem. Both these stupendous works he has heard in his youth at the Madeleine in Paris with his teacher, Alexandre Guilmant, at the organ. Or he speaks enthusiastically of the approach to the Paris Opera house and a performance of Lucia di Lammermoor. Above the falls was the saw mill of old Oliver Danyou. Beyond the mill was the Creamery; even then it was sadly in need of a coat of paint, which it has not received to this day.

We turned east and then north and were on the main road to Burlington and Montreal. This was Ferrisburgh Centre with its white and green-shuttered houses, with its Town Hall that had once been a church. It still looked somewhat like a Meeting House, with red brick and white trimmings, Gothic windows and Colonial doorways. It is a queer mixture of old Gothic and modern Colonial. Withal it has a certain charm and individuality, and might be made into a lovely thing. It is set among old maples on a green, like all New England village greens. A little farther on was the General Store and Postoffice, where one could buy anything from gloves and needles and spades to kerosene and sugar and oranges, not to mention picture postals,

ink, and stamps, when they were not "out of it," which was a frequent occurrence. All these varied and seemingly arduous duties did not prevent the storekeeper and postmaster from fishing and hunting in their respective seasons. He never made an impression of haste. In fact, things are very leisurely in our township, and he was of it.

"Did you ever see anything lovelier than our valley to-day? The hills are more beautiful in each new aspect. To-day, in their winter color, they are no longer soft, azure blue. They are royal purple, almost black." We drove on past more white and green farm houses, for about two miles, up a very slow, gradual rise. One would hardly have noticed any grade, except that the view over the valley grew wider as we went on. I had never been to the Town Clerk's. The Robinson house was set back from the road, at the top of a hill. We turned into a drive lined on both sides with stately, old, wind-broken Lombardy poplars, trees of dignity pointing their tall spires straight up to the sky, like Gothic spires and Cathedral windows. It was a stony road, leading up to the quaint, brown house. In its setting of snow, it looked like a print of a dwelling in an old-fashioned story.

The house was old, built by the forefathers of the present Rowland Robinson, the third of his name. He was the son of Rowland E. Robinson, known in the world of literature for his stories of local life and color. The farmer, writer, and artist,

for he was a painter as well, had died some years before this. His wife, Mrs. Anna Robinson, took upon herself all the cares of their farm, the duties of Town Clerk of Ferrisburgh, and at the same time had been her husband's faithful amanuensis, during his years of blindness, his eyes as well as his hands.

Mrs. Robinson came forward to greet us. She was beautiful, with hair parted smoothly over a splendid, high-bred face, with the sweet, quiet manner of the Quakers from whom she had sprung. Hers was a face and form that looked as if it had walked out from between the covers of a daguerreotype. It was a revelation to meet a woman of her type in the depth of the country, a woman whose presence would have graced any home, any community. She used the endearing thee and thou of the Quakers, and welcomed us with gracious hospitality, leading the way into a delightful, book-lined library, with old family portraits on the walls, with a glorious view of the valley and the lake, and the hills. We had tea in a raftered old dining room, black with age, with a deep Colonial brick fireplace, the kind of fireplace that George Washington described as toasting one's face, while one's back was chilled. The fire dogs and tongs, the shovel and poker were hand-forged. There were brass warming pans and other family heirlooms on the walls. Dear Mrs. Robinson! She was as delighted to meet the Doctor as we were to meet her. We promised each other many such visits. Alas!

Life was full for us all. We did not see half enough of this unusually fine personality, rich in culture of mind, rich in knowledge and experience of life. She showed us over her interesting old house with its many relics. The Quakers of Vermont had sympathized greatly with the Southern negro. They helped fugitive slaves to get safely across the border into Canada. In the attic of the Robinson house was a secret room in which many a poor black man had lain hidden and had been fed. One of Rowland Robinson's stories deals with this theme. "Out of Bondage" is the story of an old man, a hunted slave, who enters into the freedom that comes to us all, the freedom of death.

From every side of the Robinson house the view was beautiful. It gave over hilly sheep pastures to the Green Mountains on one side, on the other, it had the smiling Addison valley view of lake and Adirondack hills. "Yes, it is lovely in our quiet valley," said Mrs. Robinson, as she helped to bundle me into my wraps. "We are so glad you have come to live with us. Your coming means much to our community." We drove away, down the hill between the tall poplars toward the west, into the setting sun. Said the Doctor: "Think of meeting this high type of intellectual woman, this gracious lady here in the country. I wonder if the township appreciates her." We grew to be great friends, all three. I loved her dearly. To have

known and been permitted to love her was one of the privileges of my life. For Mrs. Robinson, too, life ended in blindness and in pain. To the very last, she remained vitally interested in the world of our small community, in the great world outside. We have no one in all our township to fill her place. She was gentle, beautiful, strong.

We drove on into the sunset with shadow lights turning from molten gold and copper red to soft lilac and cold blue. The radiant brilliance of the winter day had faded. It grew cold and gray and dim. We were glad when we came to the five oaks on Chester Hawkins' land that marked the turn toward the lake and home. Ben had fires glowing when we entered the Stone House and he had lighted the big lamp in the hall. It was good to get in out of the dusk and the cold, good to know that we had been out. It had been an interesting, provocative afternoon, filled with new impressions, filled with color. "Remember Walter, dear Walter, and his saying: 'Show you the most beautiful place in the world?' We are finding it out for ourselves." We saw Walter and his enthusiasm for all things rare in the leaping tongues of flame of our driftwood fire, and in the dancing shadows on the walls. Those we love are with us. Their spirit lives on in our daily lives, as if it had never flown.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

FARM HAPPENINGS AND STONE HOUSE GUESTS

IN February we sent up two men from New York to the Stone House to do the final painting and decorating. I went to the farm once or twice during their stay to look after the work. They were glad indeed to see me, were "fearful lonesome." They thought it must be fine in the country in the summer time. Now it seemed to them cold and desolate. They sorely missed the lights and the diversions and the noises of the big city. "Not even a trolley to let ye know ye're alive. Give me little ol' N' York," said the younger man, a tall Swede. What life means, its joys and its beauties, is all in the point of view. However, they did excellent work, giving woodwork and ceilings a delightful warm, creamy, dull finish and. putting on papers faultlessly.

One Monday morning in early April the Doctor returned from his farm visit with news. He had purchased another thirty-acre meadow. "More apple trees. I'm having good old Mr. Benton scout around for more land, tillable land for meadow and pasture. I'm aching to get our horse breeding started; and I do not wish to wait with our tree

planting either. Our orchards must be started into growth." I was far beyond any remonstrance by this time. In the first place, the farm meant all the world to us both. It was a godsend for the Doctor, joy, adventure, creative work, relaxation. It stood for all these and much more. Most things in life are a state of mind; and of all states of mind, land hunger is one of the strangest passions. It is like the taste of blood for the tiger. "This year we'll close up shop here on the first of May, even if I shall have to go down to New York twice a week for a short time. I want to get that new thirty-acre meadow started right, and I want to be on the job myself. The neighbors are prophesying dire failure. 'The land really is low for fruit growing. It needs tile drainage and ditches. We'll baby the young trees in the crucial time of their life and replant dead ones. We'll try to show these farmers a thing or two by bringing the land into a high state of fertility. Anyone can grow an orchard in a favorable situation. The fun of it is doing the stunt with every obstacle possible to keep one guessing. Something like a successful marriage. Things must not run too smoothly. Monotony gets on one's nerves, especially when allied with virtue that sticks out like the 'quills on the fretful porcupine.' Well, five or six years more of medical life and work, and then we'll move to the farm with all our best-beloved possessions, for good and all. How does that strike you?"

All this, while carefully he was holding a test tube over the Bunsen burner and watching its contents turn cloudy. Unlike many busy physicians, the Doctor did all his pathological work himself. Even at the Stone House there was a laboratory in the attic, with modern scientific appliances of many kinds. He said there were reactions so infinitesimally slight, that they would barely be reported by the expert pathologists. Yet these seemingly unimportant details, seen personally, in their sequence, at times threw a bright light on an otherwise obscure diagnosis.

We arrived at the Stone House in the middle of the night instead of at six o'clock, owing to a train wreck ahead of us. As is the delightful rule of railroad employees, we were told nothing definite. We read it next day in the papers. It was midnight, with a clouded moon, shadowy, and cold, cold as charity. This was winter, not spring. We had hot coffee and sandwiches, and gradually got thawed out sitting by a roaring woodfire. By the time the maids went to bed, and the house settled down to quiet, it was three o'clock. "What is the use of going to bed now?" said the Doctor. "Let's watch the moon set and dawn rise." He hated bedtime almost as much as a child. We loitered through the dim, strangely silent woods. The bare-branched trees loomed ghostly in the waning moonlight. There was still broken ice in the lake, and the water looked black and forbidding. Spring

and awakening seemed very far away. The trees were asleep in the gloom. Even the pines were gray, not green. Indeterminate sounds made more noticeable the pale silence about us. We watched the moon sink slowly below the western hills. It was cold, depressing, with a weird, thin light beginning to outline the skeleton trees, like daylight slowly making havoc of artificial light in a chamber of death. I shivered. "Perhaps bed would not be so bad, just now?" "Bad! You aren't much of a sport; just spineless, with a jellyfish backbone. However, it *will* seem good to stretch out for a bit." At any rate, there was not much of spring gold in that raw, blue light. Cubists, futurists, dadaists, and their ilk might love it and put into it all sorts of things that no sane mortal could find.

Five or six hours later the world had changed. We had slept, we were rested, and the sun shone radiantly. Already the long, strenuous winter had receded into hazy distance. It was so delightful a homecoming to countless interesting, beautiful, real, and elusive things. Our neighbors telephoned welcomes. We were now residents, no longer newcomers. They knew we had come to stay and to do things. They were glad, and showed it. All outdoors was blue as blue. The air was filled with what Bliss Carman calls "filmy gold." There was the indescribable earthy smell of resurrection. Oh, it was a good world to be alive in! The cubist moonset and cold dawn was past. We were on the

farm for the beginning of things. We would see the setting of trees, the seeding of grain. I was planning to start my hardy garden east of the sunrise porch. I would help to set hens. Three colts were expected, Lady's, Sister's, and one of the workmare's. Each day was filled to the brim with exciting, splendid happenings, adventures all. There was still much to be done on the drive. The Doctor expected to put up his concrete gateposts, to rebuild and to enlarge the horse barn, and a hundred other things equally absorbing.

First of all, after looking over our stock, we went to see the farm tools we had bought. They came from the International Harvester Company and from our friend, David Hays of New York, who exports agricultural implements to the Argentine.

We had here a reaper and binder, a seed drill, riding and walking cultivators and ploughs, hay forks, rakes, both plain and side delivery, and as many more. The Doctor whistled gaily. His eyes sparkled. "What fun it will be to set these up on rainy and on lowery days!" It looked to me like a thousand-piece puzzle picture.

The trees had come. They had been carefully heeled in, and were to be planted directly. This time the Doctor had bought dynamite, and the holes were blasted instead of dug. There were many hundreds of trees to be set out. There would be no time for little touching rites of prayer like the old French Canadian's. Modern scientific efficiency

does lack a certain leisurely romance. A tractor-drawn reaper has in it something awakened, big, compelling, yet a certain quiet beauty is gone forever with the scythe and the flail, a friendly humanness, as it were. The smell of gasolene and kerosene, the noisy, puffing, breathless tractor, the rattle of machinery prevent one's hearing the rustle of wings, the odorous wind in the trees, the murmuring water.

Instead of the quiet digging of holes with the spade or a posthole digger, noisy blasts shook the golden-still air. I told the Doctor what I thought of his dynamite. He laughed. "I knew you would hate it. You belong to medieval times, along about the Crusades. Never mind. Listen to our Fifth Symphony bird." This was a sweet-voiced bird, who was nesting in the drive, in the future rose garden. I called her a song sparrow. The Doctor thought she was one of the warblers. She regularly began her song with the first theme of Beethoven's Fifth, absolutely correct in tone and in rhythm. We loved to hear her, and hoped she would teach her babies the theme.

Our currants and raspberries had begun to leaf out. Apple trees and berry bushes had been sprayed for the first time with lime sulphur and arsenate of lead. By the middle of May we had a "mess" of asparagus. It is the most delicious thing. No one, who has not tasted the green, purple-headed spears, straight cooked out of the garden,

knows their real flavor. Our rhubarb did not look happy. Strange to say, I have since tried it all over the farm and cannot seem to make it thrive as it should. I tried covering it in early spring with half barrels filled with well-rotted manure, and more forcing stunts. To no avail. My neighbors say, "I have bad luck with pie plant." The probability is that I make some mistake, or perhaps there is some element wanting in the soil.

We got in our black onion seed for late onions, and our onion sets for early ones; our first peas and early potatoes, our carrots and beets and lettuce and radishes; also spinach, chard, and the rest of the frost-resisting seeds. Beans, both wax and Limas, egg plant, corn and squash and cucumbers, melons and pumpkins had to wait until there was no longer danger from a late frost. Meanwhile they were ploughing my flower garden. Wheat for our own flour was already showing tender green spears above ground. The earlier one can get one's wheat sown, the better the harvest is apt to be. Oats were seeded. The seed bed was being prepared for barley and speltz, for corn and millet. The Doctor sprayed all his seed grain with a solution of formaldehyde, contrary to the advice of our hired men "Never heerd tell o' no sich thing. What's th' use o' it, anny ways? Much good they boughten stuff'll do ye, ef we git no rain in June, er a pest o' locusts." Spraying was done just the same.

Lady and Sister, and Whiteface, the workmare,

were all three put into pasture to await the coming of their colts. The Doctor did not believe in working or driving them within four weeks, at least, of their parturition. There were nine piggies in the hog pen. Our Chester Whites, inappropriately named Sir Launcelot and Lady Guinevere, had a happy family of nine babies. They were cunning pink-white things with funny curled-up tails. It was interesting to watch them with the mother sow. Each one had its own teat, for a brood sow has as many teats giving milk, as she has babies to feed. Sir Launcelot was banished from his family circle for the time being, for fear he should chance to fancy a delicate morsel of piggy. He might not scruple to devour one of his own.

Dearest of all was watching the swelling of leaf buds, their bursting, the coming to delicate tracery, to baby leaf, to full green richness of color and of form; to watch cloudy veils of mauve and gray turn to distinct outline of bud and leaf. The willows and poplars began the procession. Then came the elms and the maples and beeches. Last of all the shagbarks and the oaks and ash leafed out. Each tree hangs out feathery, differently-shaped and colored bud tassels. Out of these charming bud tassels fly the winged seeds, nature's wondrous provision for future trees. All seeds are carried on the wings of the wind, but many tree seeds have their own propellers. Winged seeds are given to the maples, the elders, the elms and basswood, the pines

and firs, the birches and poplars. It is quite marvelous to watch seeds with wings in action. For instance, the pine seed whirls as the wind carries it. In this way it can fly a long distance before it settles down to earth. Perhaps this is the reason for isolated great pine trees we see in the middle of a pasture.

The days were filled with riotous light. The meadows wore their dress of resurrection. Wild flowers were unfolding everywhere. Wild birds were singing, nesting, mating. It was a world of spring, of youth, and of vigor. Into all this living, pulsing beauty came the flowering of the fruit trees, the end, the apotheosis of spring. With the spraying of the falling blossoms, the stress of seeding time was over. One milestone of the farm year was passed.

Many friends came to us. Among them we were happy to welcome Marion Crawford, who stopped with us on his way to the White Mountains. He was a patient, and a dear friend as well. We always saw him during his short annual visits in New York. Most of the year he lived with his family in Italy, at Sorrento on the heights above the Bay of Naples, where he had a charming home. In manner and speech he was a typical Englishman. I showed him over the Stone House. He liked it immensely. "Beautiful, restful, a home," he said. "Did you have any trouble getting your plumbing and water system installed?" he inquired. "Fancy! When I

built my home in Sorrento, I wanted American plumbing. I had all materials, bath tubs and so on, sent over. No one in all the country round about had ever seen anything like the nickel and porcelain and pipes, not to speak of couplings and unions, and more bewildering parts. I puzzled the bally thing out, and for the nonce became a journeyman plumber." With totally unskilled assistance he had done the entire thing himself. It was rather wonderful, looking at his immaculate dress, his beautiful, slender, expressive hands, thinking of his lifework.

Mr. Crawford told us how he came to write "Mr. Isaacs," his favorite novel. He told us of his Oriental experiences. I heard for the first time that he was born in Italy, although his father, Thomas Crawford, the sculptor, was an American. Dear Mr. Crawford! It is long since he was laid to rest.

There came also Cissie Loftus. I had met her once or twice years before, while we were both ill at a hospital, when Finley Peter Dunne, "Mr. Dooley," brought her mechanical toys, and wound them up, thereby creating unusual commotion in the quiet corridors. Later she came to see the wife of the "wonderful black magic man, who had saved her life." She was demure, with a soft English voice; strangely shy, and yet more strange, she was a bit awkward. It was almost incredible, when one remembered her on the stage, where she was the very personification of lithe grace. She told us how

the Doctor commanded her to send away her hosts of visitors, to put out her lights early and to go to sleep. Unconsciously she imitated his voice, his manner, his lighting a cigarette so absolutely, that it was uncanny. Poor Cecilia! She was more sinned against than sinning. She was born on the stage, almost, thrown here and there, with no background of any sort for anchor. She was charming, appealing, intensely feminine. How could she help her fate?

There came Walter Damrosch, with his wife, Margaret Blaine, and his interesting family of daughters. They had a quaint old red-brick house at Westport, across the lake toward the sunset, about ten miles south of us. There came Huger Jervey, with his gentle Southern manner and voice, who hero-worshiped the Doctor. Likewise, there came Frank Hackett, who was beginning to make a success of his school for boys at Riverdale. Both were young men, full of dreams, enthusiasms and ideals. They seemed many years younger than the Doctor, although the difference in age was not great.

There were many more guests coming and going at all times. Best of all the Doctor liked the arrival of unannounced visitors. We watched a big houseboat coming into our bay and anchoring in its sheltered, deep water. We looked through our field glass. "I do believe it's Arthur Gray," said the Doctor, "with a party of men." A tender was launched, and landed. It put ashore Rev. Arthur

R. Gray, a tall, spare man in tweeds and yachting cap. He looked like anything but the head of an Episcopal Foreign Missions Board. The Doctor and his patient and friend were equally delighted at the meeting. I recall particularly Mr. Gray's simplicity and dignity of demeanor, his quiet humor, his kindly thought for us all.

"You won't mind having Mr. Gray's party for meals while they rest up a bit? They need a change of diet. Canned foods become tiresome." Naturally, I was glad to welcome the Doctor's guests. I inquired how many were in the party. "Six or eight or more. Who cares?" "They will," I answered, "if there is food for six and eight appear for dinner."

To be candid, the Doctor did not like anyone to stay with us very long. "Hosts and guests should never see too much of each other at any one time," he said. When visits seemed to him to drag, he disappeared into his study, wrapped himself in clouds of smoke and Greek and silence, and left his guest or guests to me. Man or woman, or both, it mattered little to him. When I called him to task for his unconventionality, he said: "Go ahead. You hate to have too good a time. You love to sacrifice yourself."

The beautiful, busy days came and went like our family and our friends. Late in June the colts arrived, two little stallions and one filly. They were darling, leggy things, stumbling all over themselves.

All in all, the arrival of the baby colts was the most exciting thing that had yet happened in our farm life. We had by this become quite used to baby calves. All three mothers and babies were contentedly grazing within an hour or thereabout, after parturition. Lady and Whiteface were born mothers and stood patiently still, while their babies, on wobbly legs, were nuzzling to find their breasts. Sister was nervous and had to be forced to let her colt drink. She fought the other two mares and their colts, and finally had to be put into a box stall in the barn. In thrashing about, she hurt her little filly, and it developed peritonitis. The Doctor carried it in his arms to the Stone House, and cared for it as though it were a human child. It died, poor little baby; and then Sister was restless and unhappy. Her milk was taken from her, yet she seemed discontented. Even Scotty felt badly about the filly's death. He snuffed all over the poor, shiny, little body, wagged his tail and looked sadly at the Doctor. Or so he interpreted his dog's actions.

The loss of Sister's colt was our first farm tragedy. We did not count such troubles as gasolene engines that would go wrong at most inopportune times; hired men, who insisted on getting drunk; castings that gave out when the tool in question was most needed; and all the rest of the dozens of irritating small and big happenings of farm life, things that are bound to come in any enterprise. The

Doctor rarely lost his temper. I recall one vivid instance. One of the men poured paint oil into the workshop engine instead of lubricating oil. Then he spent appreciable time in wondering why the "damned thing" would not work, and run the pump in the artesian well. A long day's hard work was needed to bring pump and engine back into working order. Carelessness so stupid would have tried a saint's patience.

We experimented with Indian Runner ducks, with Bronze turkeys, and Embden geese. Eventually most of the duck were shot, for wild ones. The baby turkeys would insist on getting wet in rain and dew and dying. The geese, splendid white ungainly things, preferred the flat rocks and our bathing beach to any other, for their night quarters. They invited the neighbors' geese to share their chosen place. Geese are the messiest birds imaginable.

We had Belgian hares. The only interesting fact I could discover about them was again the mother and her babies. Before their arrival, she used part of the fresh grass or hay fed to her to close up the entrance to her hutch. So tightly was it wedged in that one had to lift up the entire hutch to see her nest. Yet she managed to enter in the regular way. She lined her nest against the coming of her babies with soft, downy hair torn from her own breast. It was quite bare. When at last her baby rabbits came, she fought the father until they were sepa-

rated. Then she seemed perfectly content, and devoted herself to her tiny offspring. Until the little rabbits were well able to care for themselves, she kept the entrance to her home tightly shut, changing the grass as she thought it necessary.

The long bright days went on peacefully, excitedly, joyously, anxiously, as the case might be. We had a few marvelous red raspberries with a dry, rich, delicate flavor like old wine, and with an old wine's beauty of color. We had splendid vegetables of many kinds. The drive grew in usefulness and in beauty. The house mellowed and sank more and more into the green and gray of the landscape, as the year wore on to its golden, mellow fulfillment. The rich, deep, succulent green of all things was slowly misting into pale, soft green, into bright yellow, into dim red. Over night came the first hoar frost. In the morning there were splashes of gorgeous crimson on trees and on vines. Another milestone passed. Harvest time.

We had been almost five months on the farm. Much was still to be done. We were content, with the content of work achieved, healthful, interesting, worthwhile work. Yet we had found time to play. "Why, it is all play," said the Doctor. "I am coming to the conclusion that this farming game is a great gamble, more so than a poker game. That's what makes it so intensely fascinating, aside from the beauty. The uncertainty, the everlasting adventure is the joy of it."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LAME DUCKS, ORCHARD GRASS AND RACES

MADISON Square Garden and the "Old Glory Sale" at Thanksgiving time had a strange fascination for the Doctor. Long before the date set for the sale, he pored over the catalogue with its cryptic pedigrees and marked the brood mares and the trotters he wanted most to buy. Fortunately his patients held him down to earth. There was no knowing what he might not have done otherwise. In the end, he came into possession of a really beautiful bay mare, trotting stock, young, very fast, a splendid individual, without a blemish. Her name was Madge Wildfire. Also he bought a brood mare coming three, Young Sweet Marie. She was out of two of the fastest trotters of the time, Sweet Marie and Bingen. She had been hurt in her first trial race, and therefore could be used only as a broodmare. She was in foal to Justice Brooke, another sire famed for speed. Young Sweet Marie's colt would be eligible for entry into the Kentucky Futurity, which fact was cause for great pride and rejoicing. We slept, ate, and drank trotters, race tracks, Hambletonians and thoroughbreds, Morgans and Arabians, Belgian draft stallions as

against Percheron bred, ad infinitum, until it seemed as if the house should have been filled with sawdust and tan bark, with men wearing loud-checked clothes with red and green ties and diamond horse-shoe pins.

The first week of March the Doctor went up to the farm to look after his precious horses, and to attend March Meeting, that all-important function of village and country life. March Meeting with its generous, free-for-all discussions is the first sign of winter's break-up. The Town Hall is reached by ploughing through miles of indescribably sticky mud, or through deep, melting drifts of snow, hard-packed on top. To come all the way from New York to be present at Town Meeting gave the final touch of allegiance to the Township of Ferrisburgh.

He returned with much of interest to tell me about the Meeting with its informal yet heated discussions anent all things from road improvement to Presidential election; how the colts had grown; about his latest purchase, a pure-bred, a most marvelous individual, a Holstein-Friesian bull calf, the future sire for an accredited herd of the breed. I looked my surprised wonder. But more of this anon. He told how deep the mud was where the frost was beginning to leave the ground; how glorious was the color in the marsh; how he intended to help improve the Slang Bridge, which was now impassable; how well our ice houses had been filled; how stupidly our men had interpreted his order for

exercising Young Sweet Marie and Madge Wildfire. Despite their slender racing build, they had been used to draw fertilizer from the station at Ferrisburgh to the farm "through the worst roads at the worst time of the whole year." Sparks flew, even in the telling. I could well imagine that there was more than just sparks when the Doctor had made his discovery. "Like using a piano for kindling," he said. I was surprised the poor, dainty things of race would submit to such indignity, and said as much. "Submit! They would do anything they were asked, until they dropped in their traces. That is breeding, in man or beast." Now he had left stringent written orders to drive them both for a given time on the light road cart for exercise, to rub them down thoroughly, use a liniment he had prescribed, and to bandage their legs. "By the time we arrive in May, they ought to have recovered from the results of colossal stupidity. Yet I suppose one cannot and ought not to expect even average intelligence from men in subordinate positions like theirs. If they had brains, they would soon take our jobs from us."

He went on to tell me that he had caused great excitement by talking race track and races at the Centre for the coming season. He was surprised to find on what fertile ground these seeds of progress had fallen. "There was not even one dissenting voice. They grew enthusiastic, Vermonters though they were, at the thought of horse races,

County Fair, and more Community enterprise along similar lines, all to take place in our own Township. We'll set this town to humming one of these days, you'll see. I have been thinking of something I want very much to do this year, unless you object seriously." I could guess, and I could not object.

Always, from the earliest beginnings of his professional work, the Doctor was vitally interested in the man or woman whom life or circumstances had crushed, "Lame Ducks," so called. They are legion, yet they must be found, for they are shy and unsociable generally. Newspapermen who have lost important positions through drink, and hang on to the outskirts of their former beloved work; artists, dreamers, who lack the strength of spirit that brings success; professional men and women of all degrees who are wanting in stick-to-ativeness to break away from drugs; and so on through all the gamut of derelicts who need help to steady the ladder, in order to negotiate with safety the hard, first rung. The Doctor had always meant some day to do more than to give advice, to help, actually and spiritually.

Our farm was the place where they might find clean work with their hands, in God's healing pure air and sun. The farm had a background of real things, hills, trees, birds, animals, flowers, with access to books, and affectionate human contact. There was interesting, helpful work on the farm for them all. In the end, perhaps, they might find cure. From that spring on, each summer saw two or three

unfortunates installed at Big Oak Farm. No one but the Doctor and I knew their real circumstances. They had come to work on the farm for the improvement of their health. Ostensibly they worked, more or less helpfully, as circumstances and personality permitted. Fair wages were paid them. The Doctor and I were their friends, they were invited to the Stone House and received as friends by ourselves and by our guests. Our hired men treated them as superiors who were "queer," and pitied and aided them. In most cases it worked out satisfactorily. Only one resulted in dire disaster. There were a few miraculous cures. To them all life on the farm brought sane personal contact, much happiness and peace, and greatly improved health. They added knots and twists to our various problems, but we were content. We were working with the realest thing of all, we were working with life. No child had come to us. Our lame ducks were after all frightened children groping in the dark. They gave to our farm a human and a humanizing touch.

In the long, green and gold days of June we had picnics, which everyone was asked to join, down to the last helper. Usually part of the day was devoted to some utilitarian purpose. We picked delicious fieldberries for preserving. We pulled noxious weeds. We cleared the woods of brush, fallen branches, and tangled briers, carrying these gleanings to flat rocks on the lake shore for the evening's

bonfire. The afternoon was given over to swimming matches, peanut races, boat and tub races and other larks. Of course, there was a gypsy fire with an iron kettle hung from forked green sticks. There was grilling of meat and freshly-caught fish on spits made of hardhack rods. There were potatoes, presumably baked, but usually charred in the ashes. Party of parties, there was a large freezer of ice cream.

After separating for chores on the part of the helpers and freshening-up on all our part, we lit our bonfire. We toasted marshmallows. Why anyone should like the messy things, I cannot imagine. The Doctor made every last person who could be persuaded so to do, tell an anecdote, a story, or sing a song. There were some extraordinary contributions on these occasions. Invariably we accepted them with the laugh or the gravity they were supposed to demand, regardless of what they actually evoked. Late in the evening we sent lighted balloons into the night. As they floated serenely out of sight beyond the distant woods, we sang the "Star Spangled Banner," "Dixie," "Way down the Suwanee River," "My Bonny lies over the Ocean," and more good old songs like them. At last we poured water over the glimmering, red-hot embers, and returned to our sleeping house. In its night-dark setting, it looked storied, ghost-like in the silence. Never did the farm work go better than on the days following these outings. They served

to clean the air of grouches and misunderstandings.

Summer was at our door. Tiny apples clustered on the apple trees. Pale-red currants gleamed among the bright green bunches. Bees hummed in the odorous fields of timothy and clover, Hurd's grass and clover, the old farmers called it. The orchard grass was in blow. Peas were climbing the brush provided them for the purpose. In my hardy garden, gorgeous red poppies were in bloom; pale gold and purple iris stood up proudly among their tall spikes of green; tiny blue forget-me-nots hung their shy heads in the shady bed; the rambler rose on the trellis, that bordered my garden, was in bud; weeds were everywhere despite hard and continuous work with hoe and cultivator. We dug and we pulled and we cut. They grew lustily on. Such is the tenacity of weeds, or the fertility of nature.

Haying time was upon us before we were aware. Clean, sweet-smelling work that must be done by all hands working together. There is a communal, a social quality about haying. It must be this, I think, makes it beloved of our helpers. At Big Oak Farm the apple orchards complicated matters somewhat. The young orchards made it necessary for a man to walk behind the mowing machine, so that the long cutter bar with its razor-sharp triangular knives, should not inadvertently cut down little trees. In spite of all care, this unfortunate thing happened, though rarely. It is not so much the

loss of the young tree or the cost of its replacement. It is the value of the time lost that cannot be made up. The grass near and in the long rows between the trees had to be mowed with a scythe as were the fence corners. I enjoyed seeing Jim and Ben use the scythe in the good, old-fashioned way. I loved the rhythmic swing of the motion, the sharpening of the blade on a whetstone, that gives time to look at the dazzling sky, to smell the sweetness of things.

The orchard grass was as sweet, and taller than the young trees around which it grew. "We'll git a cut o' rowan offen this," the men said, rowan meaning the second crop of hay off the same piece of meadow land. "Th' Doc', he knows whut he's abaout. Thet's why he cuts this here grass th' middle o' June." The true reason is that orchard grass makes excellent forage if it is cut early, when it contains a large percentage of protein. After the middle of June it toughens quickly, thereby losing much of its nutritive quality. Besides, in this condition it is not relished by either horses or cattle, which makes for waste. Naturally all stock does better on food it likes. It has always seemed interesting to me that the forage grasses are jointed instead of growing in a continuous stalk. The joints give them added strength to withstand wind and rain.

Clouds were gathering over the Adirondacks. This presaged possible rain. All hands were put to tumbling. Even I helped for a few minutes to see

what the operation was like. Tumbling hay means heaping the sun-dried grass into hillocks so that rain will not wet through. However, the night brought north wind and sparkling stars. Morning broke clear and bright. As soon as the dew burned off and was distilled by the hot sun's rays, loading began. A man on each side of the big hay wagon pitches great forkfuls on to the rack. A third man drives the team and loads the hay. The whole thing is picturesque. The blazing sun, the soft breeze in the waving elms and cedars, the singing birds, the sweet smell of the drying hay, the working together in unity, the feel of plenty. All these things make the picture. It looks like very simple, unskilled work. Yet dexterity is needful, and experience, to pitch and to load so that the great mass of loose hay is neither one-sided nor top-heavy. It is quite remarkable how rarely a load turns over and is spilled. The men are much ashamed when this does happen. The splendid load of hay is driven into the big, cool barn. It seems dark, gratefully fresh after the glare outside. More often than not, a big stone crock filled with iced coffee or fruit juice has been sent over from the Stone House for the men. They are very grateful for it. Haying is thirsty work.

Now the hay wagon with its odorous load is in the driveway of the barn. It is stopped right under the hay fork, which looks like a great harpoon. The fork has grappling arms, like the tentacles of a

devil fish. Many yards of three-quarter inch rope runs through pulleys along the rafters, way up to the ridge pole. A horse is hitched to a whiffle-tree, which is connected up with the hayfork rope. The fork is pressed down deep into the hay, by a man standing on the loaded wagon, and grapples a huge load in its iron arms. At the given word, the heavy draft mare walks off raising the fork with its load. Up it goes with its sweet-smelling burden, up, up to the very peak of the barn. A yell from the men in the mow and the well-trained mare turns about. The trip rope is jerked, the fork arms unclasp, and the hay drops scattering into the mow. In three or four forkfuls the great hayrack is emptied and returns into the dazzle and blaze of the field, ceding its cool, dark place in the barn to the second team with its equally big load. The work goes on until chore time, giving men and teams constant change of action. There are times, naturally, when the trip rope parts, or the hayfork arms refuse their service. The youngest, most agile worker, one who is not afraid of height, goes up to splice the rope or to readjust the fork. It looks for all the world like a circus stunt. I do not like it. By the time the orchard grass is under cover, July has come. There is a short interim, if all goes well, and haying is not hindered by rain. Timothy and clover will not be cut until after the Fourth. This is a time-honored custom.

The first races at the Centre were scheduled for

Independence Day. It was a tremendously exciting event. The track had been carefully gone over, scraped, and sanded. A grand-stand had been built. The Doctor was President of the Ferrisburgh Driving Association, which had become a member of the National Trotting Association, with by-laws and all the rest of the formal and formidable sounding rules and regulations. The races had been widely advertised. A brass band had been engaged to come all the way from Burlington. The Epworth League was to sell ice cream and lemonade and other refreshments fitting the occasion. Horses had been entered from points many miles distant, all the way from Rutland and Manchester in our own state, to Essex and Plattsburgh in "York State" across the lake. Our friends and patients, the David Crawford Clarks, who had a beautiful estate and farm at Essex at the foot of the Adirondacks on the shore, were coming over in their yacht to view the races and to dine with us. Altogether it was to be a memorable event. The Doctor would show Madge Wildfire, but owing to the mistaken exercise of the winter, he would not let her race.

The eventful day arrived, hot, clear, tempered with our favorite wind from the north, the wind that bears on its wings all the sweet, pure glory of our forests and our mountains. The race-track meadow at the Centre was a kaleidoscope of gay life and color. I had never imagined the possibility of such a crowd within the confines of our quiet vil-

lage. Hundreds of buggies and horses were hitched to fences everywhere. Ford cars were parked in all directions. Sleek horses were led up and down the track to get them limbered up for the race. Racing carts, decorated with many colors, stood ready. The marshal, his mount decked gaily, rode grandly up and down the field. Refreshment tents glistened white, were hung with flags and greens, and everywhere were holiday faces, expectant, smiling. The prizes were on view, brand new, brightly-colored horse blankets. A baseball game was in progress at one end of the field. Trumpet blasts announced the beginning of the ceremonies.

The school children were grouped around a flag pole at the starter's stand. The Doctor had donated both cedar pole and a splendid, big flag. It was raised to the accompaniment of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," played by the band and sung by the children. Raising our country's emblem is always an affecting ceremony, and we were glad when the flag floated and the band broke into a stirring Sousa March.

There were some really exciting trots, won by hair-breadth lengths. There was a free-for-all race. Long before the thing was over I was tired of staring into the sun. Not for all the world would I have permitted myself to show any abatement of interest. Such are the grave duties of social life. It was amusing to watch the Doctor, and to see how intensely he enjoyed the sensation his beloved

Madge Wildfire created. She was groomed to the *n*th degree. I truly believe she had been rubbed with ointment to make her coat glisten like dull gold-brown satin.

At last the blanket prizes had been awarded the winners. They were now engaged in sponging off and otherwise caring for their horses. People had begun to scatter. It was long after chores should have been done. Every last glass of lemonade, every ice cream cone had been sold. The demand had been much greater than the supply. Quite a sum of money was in the treasurer's hands for use in furthering the affairs of the Driving Association. The celebration was voted a rousing success in every way, the best July Fourth the township had seen for many years.

We drove back to the lake behind Lady and Sister, who wore flag rosettes on their tossing heads. The Doctor had Mr. Clark with him and drove Madge himself. She certainly was the most spirited and high-bred looking thing in sight. As we turned toward the bridge by the falls, I looked back. The field was deserted, the track empty. High above it our flag streamed out into the dusty-gold sunset light. Evening clouds hung over the distant hills, barred with gold and red like the stripes of the flag, its pure white stars in their field of blue like emblems of age-old stars glittering in God's blue vault of heaven.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

"MANY INVENTIONS"

WE were driving along the highway near the Centre. Coming up the steep path from the creek, we saw a boy leading a little black horse. The Doctor looked up sharply. He asked me to hold Madge for a moment, which I did obediently rather than joyfully. I watched Madge out of one eye and the Doctor out of the other. He spent some long minutes examining the thin, tired-looking horse. Then he returned to Madge and to me. "I shouldn't wonder if I have found the very thing for you to drive and to ride." "That starved little beast?" "That starved little beast is a pure-bred Morgan gelding coming four. He needs less work, sufficient food, and good care. He'll be the prettiest thing you ever want to own. You could not guess his name. The boy said they wavered between calling him Toothpick or Sliver when he came to them, he was such a tiny colt." We rarely changed the name of any of our purchases, if it was not altogether impossible. Sliver became a much-loved member of our farm family.

For many years he was my especial pet and driver, receiving all the tid-bits and the lightest

work in the barn. He had spirit and endurance, was gentle and fast, and grew to be beautiful indeed, just as the Doctor had prophesied. After middle age, unfortunately, he developed a spavin. He was fired by a veterinary. Firing means burning the affected bone of the leg with a heated iron. Much to the veterinary's surprise, the Doctor insisted on giving poor Sliver a hypodermic to lessen the agony of the operation. He had a year's vacation in pasture and in box stall, but he never recovered entirely. To the end of his life he was beautiful. He was the pet of the barn, doing very little at any time and spending the summers happily in pasture. The school children, on their way to and from the Porterborough School near us, saved apples and sweets from their lunches to feed him when he was in the paddock. All the countryside knew Sliver. Like Scotty, he belonged. Both were night-black and shone from much grooming. Both were clever and devoted to but two people in all their world, the Doctor and me. Like Scotty, many years later, Sliver was mercifully shot and buried with all his belongings. When I say mercifully shot, I mean shot, so that he died instantly, without knowing what had befallen. Both Sliver and Scotty were deeply mourned. They had been beloved friends and comrades.

Cared-for animals have one great advantage over their human friends. One does not permit them to suffer unduly. One puts them out of their pain.

We who are human and are sure of our souls must live and eat out our anguish to the bitter end. More than once the Doctor said to me: "Every profession has its tragic side. The tragedy of the physician is his duty to prolong life when death would be a blessed relief."

Grading had begun. Four teams were drawing earth. North and south of the Stone House the work went busily on. This work, the Doctor explained to me, was the starting point for the lawns. I did so love the evergreens, with their carpet of forest floor all about our house, made of odorous pine needles, cedar branchlets and the accumulation of hundreds of years of rich leaf mold. It was so brown and sweet and springy. To tell the truth, I hate change, or rather, I fear it. One can never be sure of the outcome. The Doctor, on the contrary, liked nothing better. "If one could always foresee each happening's positive result, life would lose half its interest, and most of its joy." The grading was fairly messy. Given the right sort of wind, dust flies in clouds, another drawback. However that may have been, the teams went on like the perennial brook.

Meanwhile our flower and vegetable gardens grew and flourished. Our strawberry patch was a tyrant, so were the raspberries and the currants; in fact, all the gardens tyrannized over us. Not only did we share with our neighbors, but also we preserved, and we jammed, and we jellied; we

blanched and we dried and we canned; hundreds of glasses and jars until I felt as if I never wanted to see another rubber ring, or another drop of melted paraffine for the rest of my life. With the coming of a new summer, one remembers the winter's delicious vegetables and condiments and sweets and how home-grown and home-made preserves are appreciated by family and friends in the city, and has forgotten the hot sun, and the hotter kitchen with its cloying smells. The Doctor bought and taught us to use sugar thermometer, sterilizer, and evaporator. Both Mary and I were conservative and in our heart of hearts disliked giving up accustomed, old-fashioned ways; for instance, trying fruit juice on a plate, on ice, to see whether it is sufficiently jellied, and similar guesswork methods. We soon learned that exact, scientific ways, once they are understood, are easier, quicker, and infinitely less wasteful.

At this time I began to appreciate fully the pamphlets of our Department of Agriculture, those splendid, carefully worked-out and tabulated monographs to be had from a paternal government for the asking. The Doctor had accumulated hundreds of them. He had bound and catalogued them painstakingly. Truly, it is marvelous how much help our Department of Agriculture gives, is happy to give in the most efficient, courteous manner possible. You have an unnamed apple, or one that is not true to name. Send it to the Division of Pomology.

Without undue delay your apple is named and every question is fully answered. Your cedars have a disease. Send a branch to the Division of Forestry, or Plant Pathology. Back comes a letter of explanation, cause, remedies, etc. The unfailing courtesy and helpfulness of the Department was so fine that one Christmas the Doctor wrote a note of acknowledgment to Mr. Wilson, then Secretary of Agriculture. In return we received a pathetic letter of gratitude. "He was deeply touched. In the course of his many years of serious endeavor in the Department scores of complaints had reached him. This letter of appreciation was the first in his experience."

There are drones in the henhouse, as well as in the beehive. One day in early September a poultry expert, connected with the Department of Agriculture Extension Service, came to cull our hens: Barred Plymouth Rocks, White and Brown Leghorns, Columbian Wyandottes, and Bantams. The henhouse was whitewashed and had chaff on its cement floor. The drones were picked out, and put into a separate compartment of the house. By this time the expert, the Doctor, and I looked like dusty millers, and our throats felt as if we had worked at the end of the thresher after a dry summer. The result of our culling gave me the surprise of my life. Among the culls were splendid hens with bright red combs, lustrous feathers, deep yellow feet and bills, the very birds I should have selected as particularly

fine specimens. The poultry man picked up a Plymouth Rock hen whose feathers looked dingy, whose comb was pale, whose legs and feet and bill were a sickly yellow. "You see," he said, "this hen has worked and has done her duty. She is tired out, her feathers show it. They need renewal by molting, which is the deserving hen's time of rest. The bright color of her comb and beak and legs has gone into the making of egg yolk. She has paid her way." Now we looked at the imprisoned birds. "They have laid no eggs, or very few. Do not sell these culls for a week or ten days. If you get any eggs, you may send them to me unwrapped through the mail." There was not one egg to send. Those beautiful drones had been eating their heads off and enjoying the sunshine. No wonder they were well-groomed and strong and bright.

"When shall you be ready to preserve your eggs in water glass?" asked the Doctor. "We must get rid of our roosters before that time." He explained that eggs preserved in silicate of lime keep better if they are sterile and are put into the solution daily as they are laid. As an experiment, we kept some of the preserved eggs until the following spring. We used them for baking, for sauces, and general cooking. We were surprised to find that the yolk and white separated perfectly, that the white could be beaten stiff, and that there was no unpleasant taste. The secret of success is, therefore; fertile eggs must not be used, fresh eggs of

the day's laying must be put into the water glass. The eggs must be taken out, a few at a time, as used, and not exposed to the air unnecessarily.

The Doctor had a smoke house built for me, out of our lake-shore granite. It had a great nail-studded door of oak, and looked like an entrance into a cave or secret passage. I told him he had built a smoke house with an operatic flavor. It might have been Aïda's rock tomb in which she sought death with her lover Rhadames. We were eager to smoke our own hams and bacon and to make home-made sausage. Eventually we made all three, trying out the various ways recommended to us. It is strange that no two people ever happen to tell you one and the same method of doing anything, whether it is feeding hens or hogs, tracing up corn, or making a permanent whitewash. We tried dry pickle and wet brine. We made fires with corn cobs and with shagbark hickory. Like everything else, we had to learn by experience. It was splendid fun learning. Nothing could equal our pride when we sent off home-grown, home-cured, home-smoked sides of bacon and joints of ham to our family and friends in New York. We were happy in the realization, the bewildering, the wonderful fact, that by far the greater part of our meals were grown on the farm. I am sure it is a wearisome thing for guests to hear repeatedly, yet hear it they must and do. "This and this and this all grew on

the farm. Our own butter, our own vinegar, our own cider, our own whole wheat flour."

The green-stained table and chairs of Long House days, which we used for the study at first, had been replaced by a big, oak library table and chairs, designed by the Doctor and made by a joiner at Vergennes, Joseph Danyou. Both table and chairs had straight, simple lines that mean strength and beauty. They typified the life of an oak, whose every branch and twig and leaf is beautiful, strong and made to serve its single purpose in the being of the whole. The many-drawered table was the most sacred thing in all the Stone House. It was always cluttered with a hundred things. Every scrap of paper was precious beyond compare, especially if lost or mislaid in one of my "straightening out and putting in order spells." Said the Doctor: "In my 'mix-up' I can find every last thing. In your 'perfect order,' nothing is where it ought to be." Magazines, books, manuscript, breeding records, apothecary's scales, letters by the dozen, frequently unopened, pamphlets, paper cutters, writing and smoking materials, fishing rods and whips and riding crops in need of repair, and much more littered the big table. The magazines were legion. There were many on agricultural subjects. I felt in duty bound to read as many of these as I could manage to. They ranged from the *Breeder's Gazette* to the *Country Gentleman,* from the *Holstein-Friesian Register* to the *Poultry Journal.* How I hated to

read and to study them when my favorite *Geographic* was near. Apart from its interesting illustrations and subject matter of distant lands and peoples, I found more poetry and poetic allusion between the pages of the *Geographic* than in many a periodical devoted to literature and to literary endeavor.

Dusk falls early as September nears its end, and the birds begin foregathering. We enjoyed the long evenings in the study with its mellow, soothing lamp light and its crackling fire that showered sparks companionably up the chimney. Best of all we loved a rainy night, the shut-in-ness of it, its ineffable peace. Sometimes I played in the drawing room with my driftwood fire burning in all the colors of the rainbow. Comments floated down occasionally from the study, on smoke clouds out of one of the favorite pipes. I was singing the love song from "Samson and Delilah." "Why be so blamed melodramatic?" I tried again. "Good Lord, now you're colder than charity." Until I insisted on the critic's accompanying me, when he usually drifted off into improvising, and I was left in peace to read.

We decided to try some tree planting that autumn. A number of young apple trees had died from various causes. The Doctor was anxious to gain the time instead of waiting until late spring. Authorities differ greatly on the subject of fall planting in northern Vermont and similar latitudes.

We gave it a fair trial several seasons in succession. The result was nil as compared with spring planting. For the small number of trees that lived, the time was gained. A large percentage of the fall-planted trees died despite every possible care and precaution, a percentage far in excess of the spring-planted ones. It is different, of course, with setting out of perennial flowering plants, bulbs and so on. With these the time is actually gained, as in most cases they flower the first summer after planting.

I set out a large number of bulbs in the pine and oak grove beyond my hardy garden, tulips, narcissus, daffodils, jonquils, crocus, set them without rhyme or reason. Those that lived and thrived would appear absolutely natural, as if in their native haunts. A great many lived, and are still a joy. They come up, seemingly in the most unlikely places, the snowdrops and crocus first, before even wild hepatica shows its tiny flower. I got my desired result of naturalness in more ways than one. Each spring since I planted my bulbs, some worker digs up a flower, roots and all, and brings it to me as a wonderful find. I have not the heart to say that it is not a wild thing. Again, our first asparagus bed was industriously ploughed up one autumn with the rest of the garden. The man who did the damage was so abjectly sorry about his carelessness that the Doctor said very little.

On the whole, the best of the hired men tried hard to please us. They tried to remember to replace

tools in the workshop instead of leaving them where they were last used, their common habit. For instance, they were repairing fence. Post hole digger, fence stretcher and chain, wire, staples, or sledge hammer were left over night or longer near the pasture fence in the woods, or the line fence on the high road. The consequence was that one tool or another was forgotten. This meant time wasted in search at the next fence-repairing job. The tools left in this wise were rarely, if ever, stolen. Only since the coming of motors and strangers on our roads do we lock our barn doors and our tool houses at night. I recall a strange stealing at Big Oak Farm one snowy night. Rails and posts of an old split rail fence were carried off bodily. "Well," said the Doctor, "it is cold. Someone got good and warm at any rate. Besides I had meant to replace that worn-out rail fence by new cedar posts and woven wire at the first opportunity." In the course of time we lost several row boats which were taken by State School runaways to cross the lake into New York. Usually they cast the boats adrift when they landed. After this experience, we kept oars and oar locks at the Stone House instead of in the boathouse at the dock.

Grading for the lawns, which had been going steadily on, was finished. I was delighted when they told me that the last load was in place. There was a big south lawn, and two smaller ones each side of the south porch or drive entrance. Here at

last, in actual being was the turn-around of Mr. Platt's water color, that mystified me so long ago. The north lawn had a terrace at both its east and west ends. Of necessity more trees had to be cut. Then the two-horse roller came and the dirt was rolled and rolled and rolled again. There came a long soaking rain. It rained steadily and drippingly for two days and nights. Grass seed was broadcasted all over the prepared spaces. High-grade fertilizer followed, and the deed was done. In less than two weeks a mist of green began to veil the brown earth. When the Doctor showed me the pale green of his grass seed that had sprouted wings, I ceased regretting my lost forest floor. At last I visualized the meaning and the setting velvet-smooth lawns would give to the Stone House. "Next comes the retaining wall and a balustrade. We'll look up a balustrade this winter."

The time had come, alas, for our return to New York. Each succeeding year it grew harder to leave the farm and all it meant to us. Never was the beauty, the joy, the peace of it all so poignant as when we took our last long look at the blue hills, splashed with bright color, at the lake sparkling in the crisp October air.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE ROSE GARDEN HOLSTEIN-FRIESIAN CATTLE AND CONTROVERSIAL MOTORS

THANKSGIVING DAY was veiled in sunny mist. Even in the walled city streets it was a day of grace added to summer. There was a sound of hammer and chisel in the office and I wondered what the Doctor could be taking apart. He came into the library carrying a marble statuette. As usual, he was followed by Scotty. "I've found our balustrade, and I could not resist the lure of this. You are please not to ask me what I paid for it. It is a Christmas gift for you and your rose garden. It seemed such a pity to wait for a whole month to show it to you. Now we can enjoy it for just that much longer." "It" was Donatello's charming little "Laughing Boy." The man of dreams straightway got a pedestal and put it under the chandelier in the center of the room. "Here's your rose garden," waving his arm at chairs and books. "Your Donatello baby will always be smiling at the loveliness about him. Can't you smell the roses and the pines and cedars? Can't you hear the lake and the wind in the trees? Don't you wish it were spring? Let's leave him where he is for the present." "But

this is November, and we are in New York. Don't you think our Donatello baby will be quite as happy on the piano or on one of the bookcases?"

Once again came spring to gladden the heart and awaken the spirit of the world. It is a blessed privilege to live and to die where ever-changing seasons bring magic and peace. Spring was slow that year, deliberate, filled with cold wind and snow flurries. We were glad, for all the joyous adventure of awakening would be ours.

There was neither sleighing nor wheeling on our roads. Soft drifts of gray, tired-looking snow, and deep ruts of sticky mud alternated. The drive to the lake was long. Yet there was the feel of spring, the smell of pregnant earth, despite the raw wind and leaden skies. We turned into the drive at last. The Stone House loomed through the trees. Home! A thousand times more home than the house we had left wrapped in muslin and camphor smells. We passed the Big Oak. The ancient tree held out its gnarled, bare branches protectingly over the clearing. There was no sign of swelling leaf buds, yet down deep it was awake and seething with life. Yes, underneath all this cold spring world there was awakening, flaming life. Wagner has immortalized this slow resurrection, this bursting into passionate flame in his marvelously conceived, poetic interpretation of the old Norse legend of love and spring in "Die Walkuere"; typified by the meeting of Siegmund and Sieglinde, their passion,

their heroic son. Pagan, unmoral—perhaps. It is kin to all myths of all early peoples, Sanskrit, Greek, Norse, and all the rest. Morality in its finite sense has little to do with the poetry of nature. Early religions were after all little else than imaginative interpretations of birth and death, love and hate, courage and fear, in their relation to natural phenomena. No poet, to my way of thinking, has understood more deeply this fundamental difference between the psychology of pagan life and religion, and the philosophy of medieval life and morals, than the musician Wagner. Goethe, had he been a minor poet, would have been a great scientist. Wagner, had he been a minor musician, would have been a great poet.

"Dreaming?"—The Doctor was speaking. "Suppose you wake up and look about you. There's a new clearing." "Oh, the rose garden!" Not one word had he told me. The clearing for my roses was freed of trees and stumps. It was ready to be ploughed. "I have ordered your rose bushes from Charlotte. We'll plant them together as soon as the weather permits preparing the land."

Before night it was snowing great flakes. I rejoiced at the pure, soft whiteness of things. Old Ben looked glum. "An't we hed enough o' winter an' snow. Wish'd th' grass'd git t' growin' green! Ye looked et yer woodbine, ye planted araoun' th' walls? It's ketched good." With my hands I cleared away the snow and held a lantern close.

Yes, the buds were swelling on the ampelopsis vines the Doctor and I had planted against the foundation walls. We were longing to have their green veiling to soften the face of the gray granite. By morning the skies were blue as lapis lazuli, the sun was shining gold. Instead of the feathery white blanket of the night, there were myriad tinkling brooklets crawling over bare brown earth to the lake. Everywhere there was mud, oozy mud. But who thinks twice of mud when the air is filled with sweet color, sweet smells, sweet voices, when one knows that spring is on the way, has come?

We spent all that first day looking at our precious possessions in the barns. There was much indeed to see. Sister and Lady, the draft teams, the two splendid yearling colts; the cows, the soft-eyed Jersey calves; the dozens of piggies, chickens, and ducklings with their various mother sows, hens, and ducks; and the kittens of all colors and ages. No one on the place knew exactly how many cat mothers and babies there were. During milking time those cats and kittens sat in a solemn family circle waiting for their skim milk. They certainly seemed needlessly many, yet they kept barns and granary free of rats and mice, those pests of farms and farm buildings. The Doctor showed me his Holstein-Friesian yearling bull and two yearling heifer calves he had added to our farm family. All three were of different families, but with equally long names and pedigrees. These were the nucleus of our future

herd, he explained. "They are all three registered. See the white tips of their tails. That is one of the necessary distinguishing marks for eligibility." "White tips to their tails, what a ridiculous thing!"

Holstein-Friesians are big, strong-boned cattle with sleek, shiny black and white coats. Every last marking and line and spot has to be carefully noted when applying for registry in the Holstein-Friesian Association. "They may be very wonderful beasts, but they are not half as beautiful as our dove-colored, dainty Jerseys." The Doctor went on to explain that he had decided on Holsteins for the large quantity of milk they give, although it contains a smaller percentage of butter fat per pound of fluid. "As family cows the Jerseys and Guernseys with their rich milk, comparatively small in quantity, are a good investment. From the commercial point of view, and with the idea of selling whole milk, the Holsteins are a far better one. Given the right sort of care and good pasture with plenty of pure water together with balanced ration feeding, the best type of individual will give three milkings per day."

"You wait and see what we'll accomplish when we get a stock farm. We'll build silos and put a large acreage into fodder corn and millet. We'll grow alfalfa and soudan grass, cow peas and soy beans. We'll grow and mix our own balanced rations. What fun it will be trying out all the various methods of feeding and of food. Some day we'll

have beef cattle too: Shorthorns and big white-faced Herefords." It made my head swim to think about all these things. For the Doctor these plans and problems were adventures; they were sweeter than meat and bread, than sleep and wine.

On Memorial Day came a gift in the shape of an Old English Sheep dog, a beautiful gray and white thing, in color much resembling the Stone House. Jim took her out of her crate. "Gosh! Ef I'd a met thet in th' woods of a black night, I'd a wish'd fer my gun t' shoot fust an' look after." She was the gentlest creature, and soon shared Scotty's adventures and some of our love. I called her Drive, a name more fitting for a male hound than for a female show dog. We wanted local color; Drive was the name of a favorite dog in one of Rowland Robinson's stories, so Drive it had to be. It was amusing to watch Scotty and Drive together. The male dog knew his place and gave way in all things to Drive, the lady. He did it with fairly bad grace, like an only child into whose life a baby sister has come. Drive knew a good thing when she had it, and invariably got the juiciest bone, while Scotty looked dejectedly on. Scotty outlived Drive by many years, although he was her senior. So, after all, he got the better of the female dog.

There came American Beauty, the Doctor's own saddle mare, whom no one but he could control. When a colt, she had thrown and killed a groom, and ever after she had been difficult to handle. The

Doctor won her love, and to him she showed none of her bad manners and malignant fire. Our men were afraid of her and handled her with kid gloves, as it were. She was a dark bay, beautifully built and splendidly gaited. After the Doctor gentled her, he would ride no other horse. He never spoke of "breaking a colt," it was "gentling", or ought to be, he said.

One morning, before six, I was awakened out of dreamless sleep. "Guess what! Sweet Marie has a stallion colt. Get dressed, sleepy head, and come over to the horse barn. I have already named him Justice Bingen." "What about breakfast?" "Oh, breakfast, when we've got a stallion colt eligible for entry in the Kentucky Futurity!" I got as far as the entrance door. There, under the trees in the oak clearing was Sweet Marie and her wonderful baby, that had arrived at dawn. The Doctor had brought her over so that mare and suckling would not be out of his sight for the first few days. He made a happy third in the picture. The colt was a beautifully-formed, strong little thing. "See its head, see its arched neck!" He was just bubbling over with joy and pride, as if it were all his doing. "I've been trying to think what to do to celebrate." "Suppose we have breakfast, while you do the rest of your thinking. I am hungry." "What a work-a-day person you are. Very well, let us eat."

Our rose plants had begun to sprout tiny wings. Long before this, the rose garden had been

ploughed, harrowed and smoothed. One quiet gray day, the Doctor and I had planted our roses: old timey, deep red Jacks, properly named General Jacqueminots, pink and white moss roses, hardy tea roses that have the color of dawn in spring, native single deep pink eglantines, and native yellows, Suns of Gold, and Persians. We enjoyed digging the holes, and mixing coarse sand and bone meal with the clay soil. Best of all, was setting the little dormant bushes, each with its name carefully appended. The birds and the wind, the trees and the water were all saying prayers as we worked.

The new launch had come. She had a small cabin and was everything in looks that could be wished. There was only one trouble: she would not go. Beginning with the Doctor, every man who was familiar with gasolene engines tried his hand. Once in so often, she actually went and was very fast, but mostly we contemplated our picturesque shores somewhere from the middle of the lake. We were expected at the Clarks' for luncheon. They rescued us and towed us into Essex Bay with many unkind thrusts at our mechanical genius in particular, and motor boats that were stationary, in general. "She was too big. She was too small. She was too heavy for her engine. She was too light." She certainly was cause for the use of much blue language. Experts from Vergennes and from Burlington tried their skill. She was all things to all men, and I never felt sure of her, until a different type of

Larkspurs and Moonflowers.

marine engine was installed. She was like a selfish wife. One just had to admit oneself cornered or fight without end. The Doctor hated to acknowledge himself beaten. The only time we crossed the lake without mishap was the day we went to call on the Hamilton Wright Mabies. As gentle, old Mr. Mabie came to the landing, he greeted us: "I am so glad you got here. We have heard about your boat, and we watched for you. We feared you would not be able to cross—against this big southwest wind," he added, with his usual kindliness. The Doctor winced, but said nothing.

In my hardy garden peonies had bloomed. Wine-colored hollyhocks and skyey blue larkspur, coppery day lilies, and fragrant little green mignonette were in bud. Blue Canterbury bells nodded gaily to the Sweet Williams, while the stately white iris looked reprovingly at them. Many-colored portulaca opened their childish faces to the sun and wondered why the evening primroses would not talk to them. The primroses were asleep. They had foregathered late with the new moon and the fireflies. Yellow stars of stonecrops crept slowly over the brick walk to make friends with the forget-me-nots and the pansies, but could not get near enough. A garden family is always happy. I think it must be because flowers leave each other alone so understandingly. Each one buds, blooms, lives, and dies according to his own desire.

Each day brought its own glory, its own magic,

its own work, its own disappointment. Never was there a more wondrous summer. Never was life fuller of a thousand absorbing interests. Calves were sick, horses got hurt, went lame. Rain made planting late. Crows ate the corn. Borers killed the apple trees. Cut worms ate the vegetable and flower seedlings. Every imaginable thing happened, good, bad, and indifferent. The tremendous thing, the vital thing, that stood out in starry, high relief, was the farm, the farm in actual being. We were creating. We were doing our share to help to feed the world.

The ampelopsis vines had begun to climb, holding fast with their spirally tendrils. They veiled the gray face of our house, and gave to the stone walls a look of age and of softened beauty. Our lawns were green as green. The spindle balustrade was finished and stood gracefully erect on its retaining wall. With its twin Greek urns at each end, it brought a touch of old-time formality, a look of classic dignity to house and grounds. The Donatello baby on his pedestal in the center of the rose garden, laughed with the baby rose bushes and the thrushes and the yellow warblers, at all the loveliness about him. Things had shaped themselves marvelously. Life was very full, very beautiful. It seemed that time must stand still to give thought to all this fullness, to all this beauty. "Don't plan anything, don't do anything more this year," I begged the Doctor. "Don't do anything! Don't

plan anything! Why, I have only just begun. Want to come and look at some land for the stock farm? We'll ride Beauty and Sliver and make a day of it." An hour later we rode south into a glowing September sun.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

WINTER DAYS OF LEISURE, THE ADVENTURE OF POLTRON AND THE SOUTH FARM

WHEN I went up to the farm in late January, the rose garden looked like a giant frosted wedding cake, decorated with glistening sugar fairies. They were standing up straight, were bowing down low, or seemed on their knees in the attitude of prayer. The fairies were the young rosebushes tied to stakes and dressed in their winter covering of burlap, all powdered with snow and coated with ice. It was so fantastic in the brilliant sunshine that I went out to the garden in the cedars at night, a glorious winter night of moon and stars and fiery, cold Northern lights. In the silver and blue shadows it looked still less like our rose garden. The bushes were frost elves in a mystic rite, to which the wind in the arbor vitæ beat a slow rhythm. All other sound was frozen like the waters of the lake. Beyond the silvered white stillness was mystery. The New York shore was wrapped in black shadow. The Adirondack hills were blacker still. There was no light on Split Rock. The utter silence and peace was broken only by the crackling of frost in the tree twigs. I was alone in the shadowy glory of

winter and night and silence. Yet I did not feel alone.

The following morning it was cold, windless, and blindingly bright. The air was filled with myriads of diamond crystals. Glittery particles of what seemed powdered snow was frost in the sunny air. Everything sparkled and spangled and glistened. The evergreens were a forest of Christmas trees, hung with sunlight iridescence. I found the thermometer outside the horse barn registered 25° below zero. Yet the dry atmosphere did not feel as cold as 10° above in the damp sea air of New York. Jim and Ben were at work with a gasolene torch thawing out the water pipes in the barn. It was warm indoors compared with the temperature outside.

I do love the barns in winter time; with horses and colts, calves and cows contentedly munching their hay and grain; with well-filled grain bins, with sweet-smelling hay and straw in the mows. There is an indescribable, a homely smell one grows to like in well-kept country barns. It is a smell made up of cared-for, healthy beasts, of white wash, leather, hay, grain. It is vital, alive. It stands for work and plenty. It means love, duty, home.

People of the cities have the strange idea that all work on farms, except feeding the stock and milking, ends with the advent of winter and cold. Nothing is farther from the truth. The land is covered with snow? The earth is asleep? Nature

is never at a standstill. Nature is never asleep. Farms cannot be closed up because the weather is cold, or on Sundays and holidays, like shops and factories. Does anyone, comfortably reading his morning paper in the steam-heated city, stop to think about the ways and means of his breakfast cream and butter and eggs? Does he ever stop to think of the effort that goes into the production of such simple, commonplace necessities, as milk and cream, butter and eggs?

Day after day, week days, Sundays, holidays, we get up hours before sunrise, feed and water the horses, milk the cows, separate the cream, feed calves and hogs and hens. All this and more in star-lit darkness or with a pale winter moon making oblique, cold blue shadows in the gloom. Breakfast is at seven. The sun has risen over the tallest trees spilling bright color and precious jewels on its way, painting the white winter world with lacquer and gold; or the sun is lost in leaden skies, and the day is cold steely-gray and dull silver.

Barns must be cleaned out, hay shaken down, cows released from their stanchions for a breathing spell outdoors, brood mare and colts put into paddock, roots run through food cutter for the stock, while the farm engine pumps water for house and barns. Grain is scalded for warm feed and innumerable other details looked after. By this time, most of the morning chores are done and the week day's work can begin. To-day, for instance, it is sawing

wood. The tractor has already been run to the woodpile and the belt connected with the power saw.

"Gosh all thunder, where's thet twelve-inch file?" It ought, of course, to be along with the rest of the tools, in the workshop. However, some one remembers where last he used it, and the saw is filed. Meanwhile the water pipes in the barn have been thawed out and the tractor engine starts up in the sweetest temper, for a wonder on a cold day. Sawing begins. It is a very efficient operation and a fascinating one to watch, another one of the many farm jobs, that seems crude, common labor, which, on the contrary, needs skill and nice judgment. One man brings up the long tree log and helps a second put it on the table against which the circular saw revolves. The second man works the table back and forth, and watches both tractor engine and saw. A third catches the sawn fire logs and tosses them on the pile behind him. Fence posts are saved out of the cedar boles, if the heartwood is sound. The clear, sunshiny air is filled with the resinous smell of pine and cedar and hemlock, and the pile of fire logs and sawdust grows apace.

Noon calls a halt for dinner. All the stock is again fed and watered. I am called to the telephone, that blessed, plagued country telephone. "Hear yer tractor an' th' saw. Not goin' t' use yer traverse sleighs, be ye?" "No, indeed." Most likely, the sleighs will be returned two or three

days later, with a bolt or two missing. But that same neighbor, when no veterinary could be had, gave us a precious morning in silo-filling time to save a brood sow for her piggies.

Mail time is come. We always welcome the carrier with joy. His is a long hard day, covering twenty-six miles of rough road in all weathers, stopping at every farm to take and to bring the mail. Nevertheless, he usually finds time to tell the news he hears along the way. He does not carry a watch. "What's th' use o' hurryin'?"

After dinner sawing continues. It is so noisy with the tractor puffing and the saw swishing its way through the logs, that the men have to shout at each other. It has begun to snow, but the work on the woodpile goes on under the protecting cedar branches at the edge of the woods. Woodpiles have stories of their own and memories. Here is part of a drag, there an ancient pung sleigh and old plank with rusty, hand-made spikes. Here a boat rudder, there a flag pole, and a thousand things besides. There are some beautiful old pine and cedar stumps that once fenced in our land, when fences were picturesque instead of being merely efficient. Sawing goes on until the early fall of dusk, and a blood-red sunset, harbinger of a cold night.

While the strange after-glow still burns in the west, the moon rises over the bare oaks and birches of the drive, drawing a curtain of unearthly radi-

ance over the silent winter world. Milking, feeding—in short, all the morning chores are repeated ad infinitum. Long after dark the beasts are bedded down for the night. Between nine and ten o'clock rounds are made once more to see that all things are right. The night is clear and crackling cold. This is a normal, ordinary day without serious trouble of any sort in house or in barns.

Each succeeding winter day brings its own work. There is never time enough to get all the work done. On sunny days there is chopping and clearing in the woods, top-dressing the meadows on the snow, that is, drawing manure out of the barns and spreading it on grass and newly-ploughed land. There is cleaning up and repairing of buildings and unending work of similar kind. On days of storm, seed corn is traced up, that is, braided in long strings and hung up to dry in the granary. Grain bags, horse blankets are mended, harnesses oiled and cleaned and repaired, cowbarn, hog and henhouse are whitewashed, tools are looked over, repaired, and oiled against the time of use, and innumerable more jobs are done, all equally vital for the efficient up-keep of the farm.

On Washington's Birthday the Doctor went up to start our men on the dormant spraying of the fruit trees. A spraying outfit had been sent up, consisting of a truck on which was clamped a two-horse power gasolene engine, with a barrel spray and a pump. Two horses draw the truck slowly

along between the rows of trees. A man drives the team carefully, for the snow is of many different levels. The second man holds the rubber hose, which is fitted with a fine nozzle spray. In this way the work can be thoroughly, quickly, and efficiently done. There must be no wind, if possible. Lime sulphur in strong solution is used for this dormant spray, one gallon of the ill-smelling chemical to ten of water. The team is blanketed with old covering of some sort, old harnesses are used. The men wear goggles to protect their eyes and stand to windward of the trees. This strong spray combats San José Scale and Oyster Scale principally. Except for the arsenate of lead spray at the time of the falling blossom petals, the dormant spray is the most important one of all.

Much to my surprise I received a message, telling me that the Doctor would have to remain away an additional day and night "on important business." He returned bubbling with news. He could hardly wait until he had descended from the steps of the train, to say with sparkling eyes and excited voice: "The South Farm is a fact. I've bought the old Sattley place." "The farm with the old red brick house and big weeping willow tree, and the cedar hedge?" I asked. "Yes, but there is no longer an ancient willow, nor red brick farmhouse with green shutters. The buildings burned down last week. But the hundreds of acres of tillable farm land and the great marsh besides, with the

Little Otter flowing in and out through the pastures, with birch and maple woodlots, it is all ours! You know, it is said to be one of the best farms in the township. Wait and see what we'll make of it. I've got dozens of plans already." I said nothing. I was spell-bound.

He went on. "I had to take an extra day and night, for I made arrangements to have the débris and wreck of the fire removed. I've made a contract to have miles of fencing done. They start getting out cedar posts to-day. First thing you do after breakfast——" "Well, I am glad you think there will be time to eat." "Oh, I'm fresh as a daisy, or I shall be, when I've had a cold plunge and a cup or two of coffee. You see I spent last night drawing plans for barns and silos. Didn't try to sleep." I felt staggered mentally and spiritually. It was such a big thing, such a tremendous undertaking. The Doctor was exhilaration personified, as if he had had a draught of champagne, or some other effervescence to stir his blood.

All these exciting things were told to me in the motor, on the way home from the Grand Central Terminal. "I've got to do some hustling to-day to make up for lost time. Have much trouble changing appointments?" This was as he put his key into our door. He was back, you see, with his patients. Breakfast was a hectic meal, interspersed with telephone messages to his assistant and to his patients, with directions to me for letters to be written to a

builder at Vergennes, Arthur Sorrell, by name, to the American Steel and Wire Company for woven wire, to Williams, the digger of artesian wells, about a new well to be sunk at the Sattley Place, as he would know it. For the Doctor it had already become our "South Farm." The lake farm with the Stone House had become the "Home Place." Our new farm was two and one half miles south of us on the Slang road. Therefore it was only a little over a mile from the Centre, an ideal situation for a stock farm, being near to milk plant, creamery, railroad, school, etc. We had seen a part of this land that autumn, when we had ridden Beauty and Sliver through the beautiful white birch and maple thickets and over the marshy pasture land. The wide pastures were surrounded on every side by the Green Mountains, that give our beloved Vermont its name.

We went up to Ferrisburgh together for March Meeting, although women were excluded in those days. While the Doctor was busy at the Town Hall with his duties as citizen, I drove up the main road to see Mrs. Robinson. With her was her daughter Rachel, Mrs. Elmer, an artist, who lived in New York. I was very glad to meet her, for her work, particularly her unusual postcards of New York and its environment, had interested both the Doctor and me. She was sweet mannered and unassuming like her mother. We had a delightful visit sitting close to the great

hickory log fire in the old fireplace. We exchanged views on our favorite occupations. I remember that Rachel Elmer said there was nothing in the world she liked better to do than to pick field berries in early June, when the "meadows were blue and gold starred like the blue and gold of the sky." She was gifted and happy-spirited. Life ended for her while she was still young. I shall never forget Mrs. Robinson's splendid courage, when in her old age, she lost this well-beloved child.

At Albany, on the first of May, the Doctor left us to go to the Adirondack Farms at Glens Falls. He went to look at a draft stallion, while the maids, the dogs, and I, with the baggage, went on to the farm. I had barely entered the Stone House when the telephone rang, long distance. What could it possibly be? After the usual delightful interval of trying to get connections, there came the Doctor's voice over the wire. "I could not wait until tonight. I have bought the most perfect young Belgian draft stallion. There has never been anything finer in all the county. Meet me at Vergennes on the arrival of the Flyer."

So, instead of attending to my duties as home maker, and helping to awaken the Stone House from its winter sleep, I drove with Sliver and Scotty to the station. Scotty knew perfectly well that we were driving to meet his beloved master. When the train whistled for the stop, he flew out of the Concord, that most comfortable of hand-

made carriages, and ran along the platform down to the parlor car. Howls of joy pierced the air. Conductors, brakemen, and porters knew the black spaniel, for he always greeted the train with the same shrill cries and barks. When at last master and dog got through their excited welcome, and when suitcases were deposited under the seat, we drove home.

And then I heard the whole tale anent the most wonderful young draft stallion in the world. He was bay in color, perfect in every way, would take blue ribbons at County Fairs, and would give a splendid impetus to the quality of draft teams in our township. There was only one drawback. He was named Poltron. "How could anyone have given the name Coward to the beautiful, spirited, high-bred colt? We will call him Boileau, the name of his sire." To preserve the right of registry to his get, however, and in conformance with the rules of the American Association of Importers and Breeders of Belgian Draft Horses, his formal name must remain Poltron. The amusing thing was this. Eventually his pet name came to be Polly. How it happened, no one at Big Oak Farm could tell. Think of a huge stallion, weighing at maturity more than two thousand pounds, answering to the name of Polly! He is the gentlest, dearest creature. He has his blue ribbons. His progeny are all over our township and many adjoining ones. His favorite tid-bit is a chew of to-

bacco, which queer taste he has transmitted to a number of his get.

At our farmhouse lived Alice and Ernest Curler. We had come to know Ernest years before, when he worked for the Kimballs at Basin Harbour, and was courting Alice. He was a big, over-grown, happy-go-lucky boy. One of his daily duties was to exercise Polly. To watch Ernest, who was more than six feet tall, seated in a jolting road cart, with the great horse trotting contentedly along the road, was a funny sight. There is another thing I recall about Ernest. He invariably spoke of "bugging" potatoes, cabbages, and other green growing things. Translated into English, this means spraying potatoes with Paris Green, or sprinkling salt, lime, or woodashes, on cabbages, cauliflower, melons, and so on, to prevent the ravages of bugs and worms. All in all, I think Alice Curler was my favorite of all our farm mothers. She was so placid and so sweet-tempered.

About this time an exciting thing came to pass. A real, live, new baby came to Alice and Ernest, the first child born at Big Oak Farm. Early one morning the Doctor was called to our farmhouse by the Vergennes physician, who had spent the night there, and when I awoke, I heard the great news. The Doctor said we must have a celebration on that very evening. Somehow we had the most remarkable luck with our celebrations. It was just the right sort of night, with just enough of the right

sort of wind for bonfires on the lake shore, and for luminous balloons. As our glimmering balloons were released, to go sailing off into the night, each one of us called out a good wish for Alice and the baby. "Almost as good as the proverbial fairies, who are supposed to shower gifts on a new-born child," the Doctor said.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MORE BUILDING MORE PROBLEMS MORE JOYS PRUNING APPLE TREES

WE thought our life had been full of plans and planning for many winters. Yet all past scheming had been as nothing compared with the adventure of the South Farm. The Home Place with its problems almost dropped into the background for the time being, or so it seemed. The daily press, the magazines, the very air was redolent with the slogan: "Help to feed the allies, help to crush the Germans. Every backyard must be a war garden." "Think," said the Doctor, "of the hundreds and hundreds of acres of war garden we shall have to get ready this spring. We shall have to order tons and tons of fertilizer, carloads of lime, thousands of pounds of seed. If only Sorrell will be able to keep his word and get the farmhouse and dairy and power house finished in time for spring work."

Meanwhile Williams and his men were at work on the sinking of the new artesian well. They had struck quicksand, which meant trouble and delay. As soon as they felt certain they had about reached water, the shifting and seemingly bottomless sand

filtered in, put the machinery out of gear and made it necessary to start all over again.

The builder had a large force of men at work on farmhouse and farm buildings, all going up at the same time. Either the Doctor or I went up twice each month to watch progress and to settle mooted points. The dwelling house was to be built along the same lines as the farmhouse on the Home Place. It was also to have running water, hot and cold, and a bathroom. Close by was the well they were trying so hard to sink. As yet there was nothing to show for it but a pile of gray sand, much puffing of engines, and more swearing. The power and dairy house with milk refrigerating room were all three under one roof, close to the problematic well. I asked Williams whether, after all, his magic wand had refused to work? His manners did not permit him to say what his thoughts were on the subject. He looked a number of things.

The Doctor's plans, put into technical form by the builder, called for a quadrangle around which were grouped horse barn, cow barn with two big silos, and a calf barn. The open quadrangle was to be used as a sheltered, sunny paddock in winter time, for the daily exercise of work teams and of cattle, also for the big Holstein-Friesian bull, who headed our herd. The buildings all had concrete foundations and floors. Later we found that planked floors for both horse barn and cow barn,

were more practical and efficient. In our cold winters, cement gets dangerously slippery in freezing weather. In each building there was running water. There was a small hay barn out in the meadow beyond the house. This building the Doctor intended to move near to the quadrangle group, and to enlarge by adding an ell at each end and an upper story. This upper floor would have bins with shutes, to be used as a granary. There was already a corn crib, which needed some repairs, but was otherwise practicable.

At some little distance from the house, to the north among old apple trees, a big hog house was in process of building, with a smaller hen house at one end. The buildings each and every one were so constructed that the stock they housed would have sufficient sun and air. The builder could not satisfy the Doctor with the number of windows he planned to put in. The hog house, too, had an upper floor, for the purpose of storing food for the hogs, so that no unnecessary trips to granary need be made. All the buildings had water-pipe connections sunk at least four feet under ground, so as to be below frost line.

There was a hundred-acre hay meadow along the highway. Its north end was close to the birch woods near the Slang Bridge over the Little Otter, the Slang, as the narrow stream is here called. A huge hay barn was in process of construction there, with bays for storing big farm implements, like

thresher, corn harvester, hay loader, and so on. The big, level meadow was very beautiful, particularly when seen from anywhere inside the fences. It was ringed all about with blue hills and deep green woods. From the center of it, the highroad appeared a dusty white ribbon, somehow unimportant as compared with the meadow. All this fertile land can be seen from the road. Yet driving into the big field itself, gives one a distinctly different aspect, a much wider, much more beautiful one. Every soft outline is so clearly etched, that its inherent beauty is multiplied a hundred fold.

Sorrell promised to have the house ready to live in by the first of March for the new farm family we had found, but April came before it was habitable. By that time the artesian well was sunk, hundreds of feet deep; and the pump and engine were installed. The buildings were sufficiently far advanced so that it was possible to use them, although work would have to continue for the greater part of another year. How the Doctor enjoyed it all, the planning, the directing, the many problems, the many obstacles!

There was an old apple orchard on the place of upward of one hundred trees. Among them were Rhode Island Greenings, old-fashioned delicious Russets, Northern Spys, as beautiful as any apple grown, and more tasty than most, the inevitable Crabs and Ben Davis, the latter the most tasteless apple in the world, although a good keeper. The

Draft Mare with Colt One Day Old.

trees were in greater or less need of repair. Part of the pasture adjoining the orchard was fenced in and ploughed in readiness to set out a young orchard of approximately two hundred trees for a beginning.

The Doctor had bought two additional heavy draft teams. One of the four was a pure-bred Belgian mare, named Margot. He expected to raise some splendid big draft colts out of Margot and Poltron. All these farm problems, absorbing as they were, were in the last analysis, play for the man of dreams. They were "joys," not problems. Without doubt, it was the greatest relaxation in the world for him. His professional work had grown to almost impossible proportions. How he carried all his burden of work and still greater burden of responsibility, I never understood. I never shall understand. I worried tremendously about it all, and above everything, I was worried about him. I told him so. "You don't quite see the logic of this thing. The problems of the farm seem to you complex. They are pure joy for me, they are absolute relaxation." He found time to direct charity and educational community work, and to do occasional lecturing and writing; he was a veritable dynamo of concentrated energy.

Yet I knew, I realized, that he was burning his candle at both ends. His friends and patients were concerned about his health. "He ought not to work so hard." His friend President Butler of Colum-

bia University expressed the general feeling, when he said: "You work too hard. Get assistants to look after part of your practice, but don't send one of them to me." When I remonstrated with him, "nagged," he called it, he said: "Death! What matter, so long as it comes quickly, at flood tide. However, just at present we want to get our stock farm into shape as promptly as may be. Two or three years more of medical work and New York —and then our real life will begin."

Early in April I went up to the farm. I did not open the Stone House, but lived at our farm house, where I was very comfortable. Ida Field, the farm mother at this time, was an excellent housekeeper, helpful and pleasant. I had come to supervise and to help to prune the young apple trees. Of all work in the open, I think I love pruning best. It is interesting, not over tiring, with time and opportunity to see and to hear and to smell. There are so many myriad sights and sounds and smells under God's open sky. Each has its deep underlying reason for being, its deep inner connection with all the rest. The wonder of nature is that no one single thing stands alone. It is all a miracle of related and interrelated phenomena, each one perhaps intrinsically insignificant, yet each one an unbreakable thread in the wondrous warp and woof of the whole.

We worked on the apple trees every bright day, each with our pruning shears and our curved pruning knife surgically clean and very sharp to begin

with. We cut out interfering branches and too heavy ones, aiming at symmetry and breadth rather than at height. Always we were careful to make a diagonal cut away from the little tree trunk; diagonal so that water would run off, as it runs off a sloping roof; away from the trunk, so as not to injure the bark, thereby making a wound or opening for fungous growth, rot, or insect burrowers. At the same time we cut off suckers around the base, and weeds, such as bindweed, or wild morning glory. It was joyous, splendid work. Hours flew by unnoticed, while daily the sun climbed higher, and dusk fell later.

Our young trees were protected from the ravages of field mice and of rabbits by heavy wire screening. Here and there the screens had become loosened and the bark had been chewed. We trimmed the loose edges of the bark and painted the wound with an antiseptic tar paint. Finally the trees were cared for. They were still asleep, dead in seeming. Deep down, their hearts were beating in tune with all awakening nature.

I said: "Oh, Jim, won't it be wonderful when all these trees are in bloom, in starry snowdrifts of pink and white!" "Sure, it'll be pretty. But ye an' th' th' Doc' an' me, we'll be among th' missin'." In which pessimistic philosophy there is tragic truth.

We saw great flocks of wild geese flying north, in their usual wedge-shaped battle array, with sentinels front and rear. We saw multitudes of red-

winged blackbirds returning, in companies so large that they settled in the bare trees, like big black storm clouds. Only these storm clouds chattered and piped and whistled gaily. We heard orioles and warblers of many kinds. There were countless robins, happy and impertinent as only robins can be. I think I love the robins and phœbes and wrens best of all the birds that come to us. They are indifferent musicians, but what they lack in song, they make up in neighborliness. Phœbes made nests in our columns on the porches. They are bad housekeepers, yet I love their friendly nearness and their fearlessness.

We took the burlap winding sheets off the rose-bushes, and I pruned the dead wood. We unbound the currants, pruned them to shape, and cut off all dead canes. The raspberries had been pruned in autumn, as they should be. As soon after bearing as practicable, the canes that have fruited must be cut out, close to the ground. They never bear again, merely leaf out the succeeding year and take sap and strength for leaf formation, that should go into fruit. Then came the turn of the purple barberry hedge that we had set out two years before. It leads from the gate posts into the drive. Lynn Cushman, our rural mail carrier, said they were "the prettiest thing I sight in early spring." The barberries are beautiful; they are so cheery in winter with their red-purple color against the white and gray of snow and sky.

In the horse barn on the Home Place, two thoroughbred fillies had already arrived. "Your future driving team," the Doctor said.

When the Doctor came up to take me back to New York, he had a hundred details to look after at the South Farm. There were so many that he left the Lake Farm to me. All the farm tools, the heavy wagons and trucks, the draft horses, except Poltron, the big stallion, the work harnesses and all the rest of the work outfit, was to be transferred to the South Farm before our return for the summer on the first of May.

We hated to return to New York, although it was only for so short a time. We had to buy farm equipment. First of all we bought litter carriers, with tracks to carry manure from stalls to manure pit. The carriers are much like the old-fashioned baskets running on wires and pulleys in city department stores, only in giant size. We bought individual drinking bowls for the cows, with their accompanying paraphernalia. These drinking bowls can be used only where there is running water in the barns. They are very ingenious. In the bottom of the metal bowl, there is a valve. When the cow tries to get the last drop of water, she touches the valve. It opens and permits the water from the standard pipe to refill the bowl. We bought the most sanitary cow stanchions, a complete milking outfit, including milking machine, Babcock milk tester, and all the rest of the thousand and one

things needed to make our barns up to date, sanitary, and efficient in every possible way. Time would certainly not hang heavy on our hands. The question in my mind was: How on earth were we ever going to get things into shape: the land prepared for seeding, the new apple trees planted, the old orchard cared for, and all the other details at the South Farm worked out, not to mention the problems at the Lake Farm?

In the drawing room, on the night trip to New York, the Doctor said to me: "I forgot to tell you. Guess what I've named the two thoroughbred fillies? Mary and Martha." "You didn't!" "Well, you are familiar with the Bible story. The first time we drive those fillies, in two or three years from now, you will understand." To this day,—they are no longer bay fillies but bay mares—Mary accepts life serenely, and Martha fusses about each little thing.

"Do you still consider farming a game, an adventure," I asked? "Gosh, yes. A game of games. An endless chain of adventure, a *mobile perpetuum.*" I felt breathless, as if I were in a mill race, or as if I were among the trees and houses that rushed past us in the night.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

COMMUNITY IDEALS THE RACE TRACK
FARMING IN DOWNRIGHT EARNEST

DESPITE his unending strings of problems, or as the Doctor expressed it, "his unending chain of adventure," with the South Farm and the Home Place, he planned to rebuild the district schoolhouse nearest to us, called the Porterborough School. It was in decrepit condition, hot in summer, cold in winter, with desks and windows so placed that no one but the teacher had even fair light. The floor and the roof sagged. Doors were off their hinges. As soon as school closed for the summer, the work of repairing the building was begun. Two small wings were added each side of the main building, new clapboards put where needed, the roof, doors, windows, and shutters were repaired. More windows were cut; desks were put into decent condition. Last of all a new floor was laid, and colonial drop trimming added to the outside to give a decorative touch. Then the whole building, inside and out, was painted and varnished, and the premises cleaned thoroughly.

Before the new session began, I conferred with the teacher, and we hung shades and pictures, and

filled window sills with potted plants. We were happy when everything was ready for the children, and looked so spick and span. On the opening day, teacher and pupils appeared, as always, expectant and dressed in their best. They were overjoyed at the improvements. "It is not all a question of comfort," said the Doctor to me, as we rode back to the lake. "How can one expect boys and girls to have a sense of order and decency, not to speak of a sense of beauty, if their very school home is sunless, dingy, and going to pieces?"

About this time we became intimately acquainted with the Rev. Father Vezina, whose church was at Vergennes. His parish was large, including many miles of farm land outside the limits of the town. He was a man of broad education and of musical ability. He was ever ready to give help where help was needed, in his parish and outside it. He took a deep interest in all things civic in the community. He worked hard to give the city of Vergennes a purer water supply. He was vitally interested in the State Industrial School, situated near the town. The Doctor and he planned to do a number of things along educational and civic lines in our township and beyond. Both men were deeply interested in the training of defectives, of whom we have so deplorably large a number in rural communities, a number, so large, unfortunately, that our provision for their scientifically-trained care and instruction is pitifully limited.

For many years the study of defectives of all grades and the science of improvement in their care and instruction was a subject very near to the Doctor's heart. It was never out of his mind. It was a subject, it is to this day a subject, for state-wide endeavor. Much improvement has been made, but we are only at the beginning of the work. We have touched only the veriest embryo of this question. A question that touches closely every phase of home life, of community life, of state life, of national life.

Both the Doctor and Father Vezina were undaunted optimists. They were full of energy and had the willingness to work. Rural communities are slow to make changes in their accustomed routine of life and endeavor. The two men found, as reformers are apt to do, that their great asset must be unbounded patience, added to unbounded optimism and enthusiasm.

"We'll have Utopia," I said to them one night at dinner at the Stone House. "We'll take a shot at it, anyway," the Doctor answered. "I wish you would start your Utopian schemes with our roads. Goodness knows, they need it." Our township of Ferrisburgh has ninety miles or more of roads, all dirt, and mostly clay. What this means no one understands who has not lived in a clay-road district. It means deep, sticky ruts of mud in spring and after rains; deep, hard ruts after the hot summer's sun has baked the clay. Eventually the Doctor got our

neighbors tremendously interested in road betterment. Then, too, motors and motor trucks were beginning to come into common use, making the improvement of our roads an absolute necessity.

Here also, we have made improvements. But here, too, we have made only a beginning. Until we build comparatively permanent roads we can never hope to improve agricultural conditions. Debates in Montpelier and in Washington will not do it. Nor will the granting of Federal Farm Loans to deserving farmers. If we want fair prices for our produce, and despite the help of a paternal government we are not getting adequate return, we must first of all make good roads. Then will follow in logical sequence a clearer understanding of farm conditions. Producer and consumer will be brought into spiritual, into actual close communion. As far back as 1908 President Roosevelt, man of vision as well as man of action, appointed a Country Commission to inquire into agricultural conditions. He knew, none better, that upon its farms depends the weal and woe of a nation. One of the salient necessities the Commission recommended, was good roads. Transportation facilities, on which in return depend schools, health, physical as well as mental, prices of produce and so on.

The causeway over the Slang needed repair. Our selectmen planned as before, to sink wooden cradles, that is, logs laid crosswise and filled with stone. The Doctor persuaded them to make concrete foun-

dation piers, which necessitated greater immediate expenditure, but it meant permanency. Winter storms and spring freshets cannot rot cement.

The Doctor was vitally interested in community buying and selling. He worked for the betterment of stock of all kinds and argued the necessity for the highest type of sire, be it ram or boar, bull or stallion. He planned to drain the marsh and to use the fertile black muck for cranberry bogs. His plans and schemes were endless. To them all he brought his virile, clear-thinking mind, his unceasing willingness to help, his infectious enthusiasm, his unbounded belief in the ultimate good of all things. His magnetism was felt by and influenced all with whom he came in contact. "He radiates sparks," two men of utterly different type, class, and occupation said to me. I called it hypnotism, much to his disgust.

All these extraneous interests and many others did not prevent him from wrestling with our own and immediate farm problems. He hired men and he trained them. He supervised their work. He bought improved farm tools. He helped to set them up, and to repair them when they got out of kilter. He kept everyone at work and radiated good will and cheer. He was always ready to give help and advice, to dress hurts and to condone mistakes. He argued with the drinker, and cheered up the despondent. His patience was wonderful to me. He found time to be interested in every last

little thing, from a maid's love affairs to a break in our preserving sterilizer.

His daily mail was enormous. True, letters remained unopened for weeks at a time. Eventually they too were disposed of. I was able to be of some little help with this mass of clerical work. He hated what he called "the sordid details," letters, accounts, and worst of all, bills. "Don't ask me to verify, pay them."

Meanwhile he had bought a carload of fertilizer from the American Agricultural Chemical Company, and had been in active correspondence with their chemical expert, Dr. Wheeler. During the summer Dr. Wheeler came to our farm with young Mr. Bradley, the son of the Company's president. They remained over night, and Dr. Wheeler tested our various soils and prescribed remedies. The South Farm needed lime more than fertilizer. The soil had become acid. There is a lime kiln at New Haven, two miles south of Vergennes, on the Rutland Road. It is owned by the Green Mountain Lime Company. From there large quantities of lime were drawn. This lime was stored away and was to be spread on the melting snow in early spring. In that way it is incorporated with the soil by the snow water. This is much the same as top-dressing of grass land or ploughed land with manure on the snow.

In the old orchard two men were at work. They did the same renovating that old Ben had done at

the Lake Farm. They cut down dead and dying trees, sawed off dead branches, scraped loose and decaying bark, cleaned out hollows and filled them with cement. This filling of tree hollows is akin to the dentist's work on a hollow and decayed tooth. Neither the tooth nor the tree is ready to be filled until it is surgically clean; until it is freed of all decaying pulp. The men cut off suckers and water sprouts, which take from the tree necessary sap and strength. At last the orchard was fenced in and a dozen hogs turned into it. They spent their days grazing off everything green, and eating windfalls. At sundown they were grained and watered. In a comparatively short time the hogs literally ploughed that old orchard, and grew fat in the doing. The young trees had been planted and were doing splendidly. No doubt, the South Farm was better adapted for apple-growing than the Lake Farm, where the land was so much lower, and consequently, less well drained.

There were a number of different sorts of soil on the South Place. Some clay and clay loam, some sand, but mostly it was rich black loam, splendid for grain, for potatoes, for garden truck. Sixty or more acres were planted to fodder and to field corn, over one hundred acres to oats and wheat and barley. All these grains are beautiful in growth. Best of all I love a field of barley. I cannot imagine anything lovelier than a great waving field of green-gold, bearded barley. Ten acres were planted to

potatoes. This seed, after being cut to seed eyes was treated with formaldehyde spray like the grain. There were a number of acres also of mangle beets, rutabagas, and of stock carrots. These are sweet giant beets, turnips, and carrots used for green fodder in winter. Roots are an expensive crop in a way. They need much cultivating, which, of course, is done with a two-horse riding cultivator. They are cut up before being fed. But they take the place of green feed in cold weather and are much relished by all stock, from hens and hogs to horses and cows. For hog feed the roots must be cooked and mixed into a soft mash. For this purpose there was a big cauldron in the hog house, with a wood-burning attachment.

Fertilizer was used in quantities from two to three hundred pounds to the acre with all of these crops—fertilizer of different grades and various formulæ, as required by each.

Near the dwelling house was a big field of buckwheat, planted on worn-out soil for the purpose of ploughing under after the blow. This procedure is one of the best soil fertility restorers. On this plot of five or six acres, the Doctor planned eventually to try alfalfa. He intended to inoculate the soil, as recommended by the Department of Agriculture. He had great hopes of alfalfa, and was eager to make the experiment, especially, as most of the old farmers predicted failure. Another adventure.

All this time the South Farm, or that part of it

where stood the farmhouse and the farm buildings, was a beehive of workers, a restless place of hammering on wood and metal, of blasting, of concrete work. A dozen operations were going on, all at the same time. Each morning, after going over the Home Place barns, and doling out the work to the men, the Doctor rode Beauty down to the stock farm, where he directed all the many farm and building activities, where he answered innumerable questions. By this time all farm implements, work wagons, draft horses, in short, the working outfit, was no longer at the Lake Farm. Cows, calves, and work teams were at home in their new quarters.

Our horse barn at the lake was in beautiful order and had in it only driving and riding horses, brood mares and colts, and the two young stallions, the draft stallion, Poltron, familiarly called Polly, and a trotting-bred young stallion, Vermont Toddington, nicknamed Toddy. He was out of Madge Wildfire, and a beautiful bay, our favorite color. Justice Bingen still was the precious and especial cause of pride and joy for the Doctor. He took great pride too in his horse barn and in his harness room, as well as in their contents. The cow-end of the barn had been rebuilt and turned into a carriage room, with awnings to let down for protection. Many other improvements had been made in the last two years. The Home Place, or as I liked to call it, the Lake Farm, looked at last as if it had been in existence untold years. It was pure joy to

come back to its quiet and settledness from all the noise and turmoil at the South place.

On Sundays we went on exploring expeditions through our big pastures and woods. The Doctor pored over old maps and histories of Vermont. He had come upon a number of interesting facts. Far away in a distant pasture, near the Slang were supposed to be mineral springs, once used by the Iroquois to cure many ills. We rode and we walked and we hunted all over, through birch and maple and willow thickets and in little open glades. At last one day we discovered a spring that was not entirely clogged up and filled in by the silt and the dead leaves of years. In it was the skeleton of a cow. The spring was in a charming ferny dell of white birch and hawthorn. When the Doctor had it cleaned out, and the lonely skeleton was buried, the spring bubbled and sparkled, and tasted like an iron and beef tonic. I hope the poor, drowned cow had nothing to do with it.

We discovered that originally the old Sattley Place, our South Farm and all the land and farms for many miles in every direction, had been a land grant from an English king to a favorite subject, one Church. Strange, by what right, divine or of earth, a crowned head in a distant land feels he has power supreme to dispose of land, land that is his no more than God's firmament, the sun and moon and the everlasting stars are his! Is it strange, the hatred of the aborigine for the white man, who

drove him, the owner of all the broad land, to the wall, who feels justified in banishing him, the free man, to a fenced-in few miles, called a reservation? There is nothing more tragic in all human history than the downfall of our aborigines. True, there must always be the survival of the fittest. The fateful undercurrent of all civilization, that every once in so often is brought home to us by some dire prophecy anent the end of the world, a final cataclysm of all things, as they are known and understood by us to-day.

Across the high road from our partly finished hay barn by the Slang Bridge, there was a splendid grove of locusts. In prowling through this grove we found part of what once seemed to have been a house foundation. We found a few rusty, hand-forged hinges, and came to the conclusion that here on this hill must have stood the original dwelling house; or at least, so we liked to believe. We called it the Church Foundation, and wove a romance out of part of a stone wall and some old iron. Two men with a team were picking up stone and clearing the adjoining pasture land, as the Doctor wished to plough and to fence it and turn it into meadow. Among tangly undergrowth we discovered cherry trees grown wild, and rosebushes, that must have been planted there originally. We rejoiced. Our chain of evidence seemed complete with the finding of the dear old cinnamon rose bushes, the many-leaved, fragrant little pink rose of olden time.

"Here's the hedge for your rose garden," said the Doctor, "waiting for you."

We dug up some dozens of seedling roses out of the old tangle, and set out our hedge to border the rose garden, between it and the drive. The seedlings lived and thrived and eventually grew into a beautiful great hedge that is covered in June with thousands of tiny, fragrant roses. In autumn the glossy green leaves turn to deep, soft red, like copper in need of polish. Insects do not trouble the cinnamon rose. It needs no spraying, and no winter protection; and it is a veritable colony of bird nests.

We had so many raspberries that we gave our neighbors large quantities, ate them three times a day, made jelly, the most delicious and beautifully-colored jelly of all. We made dozens of pints of old-fashioned raspberry shrub and vinegar. Our vegetable garden was everything we could wish for. My clumps of perennials looked and acted and bloomed as if they felt thoroughly at home. They were happy; flowers have cheerful dispositions. They are wonderfully grateful for care and attention. A few tiny apples were set on the oldest of our young trees. Our lawns looked as if they had been lawns all their natural lives, instead of being grafted on forest floor. Our drive grew more and more beautiful. Work was done from time to time on the drive and in the woodland and clearings about it on lowery days, when the clay land was too wet for work.

No grain had been planted on the Home Place. "This is our home," the Doctor said. "I want it to be park land, and wild, cleared woods. All we want to grow at the lake is apples and hay, vegetables and flowers, content and peace, beauty and joy." "Do you think you have about finished here at the lake?" I asked. "Lord, no. I want to clear the deep woods trail west of the ravine. Also I am thinking of making a race track in the big East orchard, for exercising our horses and for trial races. It is a long way to drive to the Centre and back, seven miles all told, before you can begin trying out a horse."

Before we returned to New York in October, a half-mile track was surveyed and laid out in the orchard. Woven wire was ordered to fence it on both sides so that no accident might befall the young trees. They laid out the track in such wise that only a small number of trees had to be transplanted.

We had become sufficiently acclimatized to call our midday meal dinner, like our neighbors. One day our dinner hour came and passed. We neither saw the Doctor nor heard from him. I telephoned the farmhouse. "The Doctor is in the East orchard." I walked over and found him seated under a great, lonely elm with one of his beloved Greek books, reading, dreaming. I came quite close before he saw me. "You, here, what's happened?" "Oh, only—— Do you know what time it is?" "Haven't the ghost of an idea." "Well, it's past

three." "Lord, I've had such a glorious time. Track's laid out, here and here and here. Won't it be fun exercising Madge and Toddy, the Bingen colt and all the rest of them right here at home in this beautiful orchard, with our hills, and our lake in sight every minute, and with the birds and the winds to keep one company? You said something about dinner. Hope you had yours. I'm not in a dinner mood."

He closed his Euripides, and slipped it into one of his many pockets. "What a bore meals and regular hours are, anyway! We'll go over to the Stone House and get Mary to put us up some sandwiches. Let's take the launch into Lewis Creek. I want to get away from things and talk to you about a book that's crystallizing, and about something else—something very exciting I've been turning over in my mind for some little time." His friend who first called him the man of dreams was not far from the truth.

With our tea basket and sandwiches and Scotty we started out in the launch and sailed north through the broad lake into the placid waters of Lewis Creek. We anchored under a splendid ancient willow where quiet pastures faded into blue misted hills. By that time the Doctor asked for his tea and for something to eat. Through smoke clouds of one of the favorite pipes—"The book will keep. It's about art and psychology. The exciting thing is this. There is nothing to be frightened

about. Your eyes are big as saucers. What do you think about making this coming winter the last one of our medical practice in town?" I gasped. "It will be difficult to break away. But the wrench will be no less great in a year or two more. Long-distance farming is not easy and is very expensive. We don't get results. And I—well, between you and me, there are times when I am a bit tired. We'll sell our house, which will give us a nest egg. We'll take everything we love best up here and give away the rest. No more telephones. No more appointments." I interrupted: "No more long, lonely evenings." "Yes, I shall be at home every night. That's one of the drawbacks.—Think of harvest and of autumn with all its color, in peace, without packing up to return to New York. Think of the first snow, of woodfires, of books, of music; the quiet, the utter peace of it."

CHAPTER TWENTY

WINGS ARE FULL-GROWN ON THE SEEDS OF DREAMS

SELECTION in a home of twenty years or more is not the easiest thing in the world. Books, pictures, rugs, and all the rest of the inanimate environment of formative years, of years of endeavor, of years of accomplishment, have intimate, compelling associations. The survival of the fittest, meaning those we love best and cannot seem to do without, are more than possibly can be permitted to survive. Finally it was done.

A far greater, a heart-rending difficulty was breaking off our medical work. Our patients felt as if the end of all things had come for them. They refused to believe that their beloved physician and counselor would be theirs no longer. He had to give endless promises of help, if dire need arose. And indeed, he was called upon countless times and responded. The last week of office appointments was the hardest time we ever remembered. The Doctor was a wreck mentally and spiritually, and had lost many pounds in weight. Yet, even those long days of stress and strain were over at last.

We looked forward with deepest joy to making the Stone House on the lake our permanent, our

real home; yet, when we turned the key for the last time in our home of many years, it was with a feeling of almost tragic finality. Part of our life was ended. It was a strange feeling, part pain, part joy, like the folksongs of the world, the Leit Motif that is underneath all life, all happiness—"Alles Irdische verhallt," nothing can last, only death, with its background of eternity.

When we arrived at the Stone House, knowing that it was "for keeps," as the Doctor said, it seemed unreal, a waking dream. But when the teams arrived with our carload of miscellaneous crates and bales, barrels and boxes, there was need for much action. Dreams had to be relegated to the time of falling snow and leaping flame.

We had thought the Stone House attractive with its simple, temporary furniture and its comparatively bare rooms. When all our favorite home things, family relics and our own gathering of years were in place, it was indeed satisfying. The Doctor had his books and prints and bronzes in his study and in the hall beyond. We had our pictures and our music, our furniture and our rugs and all the decorative bits of pottery and ceramics and glass, the brass and copper and silver we both loved. We spent rainy days and countless evenings well into the night, getting things placed where they seemed happiest. The Doctor enjoyed all this fussing infinitely more than I did, possibly because having things well balanced, "just right," meant more to his

innately artistic soul than to my mere work-a-day sense of fitness and order.

During all these days the work on both farms went on in the even tenor of its way, or I should rather say, in the tremendously complex tenor of its way. On our drive from the station to the lake that first morning, we saw the hay barn on rollers in process of taking its place near the quadrangle of buildings on the South Farm. It was the first building I had ever seen lifted up and moving.

There was still snow on the ground. It had been a long, hard winter. They were spreading lime on the meadows. Six or seven calves had already arrived, and were playing about in the calf barn. On the Home Place there were three baby colts. There were more yet to come. Poltron, or Polly, the Belgian draft stallion, was bigger and more handsome than ever. Sliver and American Beauty, Madge Wildfire and Vermont Toddington, Toddy, Justice Bingen, Lady and Sister, and the rest, knew and recognized us. There was the usual raft of kittens. Many baby chicks and ducklings were on the way. As yet, little could be done on the land; it was too cold and wet. On the Home Place, too, they were top-dressing the grass land with lime, where it was needed. The remaining acres were fertilized with manure.

One morning, while we were at breakfast, the Doctor was called to the telephone. He returned, saying that there was trouble in the cow barn. One

of the three-year old heifers had aborted. Her calf was dead, and she was sick. In all probability, he continued, he would not return home from the South Place before night. It was not alone a question of the sick heifer, but the whole cow barn must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. I asked why. "I have already given the order to turn all the cows into the paddock without delay. You see, abortion in cows, and in mares also, seems to be an infectious thing. I hope we shall not lose more of our increase."

When I rode down in the afternoon, every inch of that new barn had been sprayed with a solution of formaldehyde. It was receiving a coat of whitewash. They used a barrel spray and pump for this operation, had it connected up with the engine in the well house. In this way the work was quickly and thoroughly done. It smelled like a hospital on visiting day. The Doctor was in the midst of it all, directing everything and everybody. His new corduroy riding suit was ruined completely. "Who cares," he said, "no germs on it, anyway." Scotty, the black spaniel, was a sight to behold, his shiny coat splashed with lime. Even Beauty and her immaculate saddle and bridle were spotted white. "We're having a grand cleaning-up, inside and out. When we get through, we'll be innocence itself."

The hay barn had descended from its rollers and was in place. Carpenters were at work building the ells and reshingling the roof with slate. This barn,

as well as hog house and hen house and the calf barn were to be whitewashed. The Doctor was pleased with the efficient and quick work of his spray pump. "Don't you want us to whitewash some part of the Stone House for you?" he asked. He needed no answer. He well knew how happy I was to have no work or workmen at our home.

All this happened on a Saturday. Before we left, I watched the men at evening chores. Instead of the usual four quarts of oats per feed, each draft horse received a soft bran mash with a tablespoonful of saltpeter in addition. "Why do they get this feed?" I asked the Doctor. "This is their regular Saturday night feed both here and at the Home barn. It is given in lieu of tonic or condition powders, and keeps the horses in good trim, added to their Sunday rest. It is a sort of preventive medicine, you see, like giving the calves a dose of raw linseed or castor oil, or inoculating horses for distemper, or calves for blackleg."

Most certainly, farming with intelligence and foresight means knowing myriad related and unrelated facts. Everything one has ever studied, everything one can ever learn, has some bearing, in some way on the farm problem. In the language of the publishing world, there is not only one slant to the farming game; the slants are illimitable in number.

The cold, gray spring merged into silver and blue, into gold and green. Birds sang, mated. Meadow

grass came alive. Trees bloomed in woods and in orchards. The land was seeded, the gardens were planted. Seeded things sprouted, grew their wings, and worshiped the sun.

"For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

It was summer. Our Donatello baby smiled, laughed with the roses, white, pink, yellow, crimson. Our rose garden was a happy, peaceful place, a place of color and song. Cultivating, pruning, even spraying was joyous work.

The orchard grass on the Lake Farm was garnered and in the barn. They began haying on the South Farm. First they cut the grass in the hundred-acre meadow. It had in it a large quantity of June grass, and, what was worse, there was sorrel, and quack or witch grass. Therefore the Doctor planned to top-dress the entire area with manure, directly after haying; then to plough it and to let it lie fallow over the winter; in spring, it would be harrowed and planted to corn. The second ploughing in the succeeding autumn would, he hoped, do away with the foul weeds. In the spring following, it could be planted to oats, barley and wheat, the latter in the highest and best-drained part of the meadow. At the same time the land could be stocked down to timothy and clover, part red top, part alsike, a white clover. In this way, the neces-

sary crop rotation would be achieved and thereby the land brought back to hay.

For use on the South Farm, where the hay area was large, the Doctor had bought a hay loader, a side delivery rake and a tractor. I saw these implements used for the first time that year. To-day we have them on all surrounding farms, but in those days they were rare in our neighborhood. The side delivery rake eliminates the necessity for tumbling hay. It gathers the sun-dried grass in its revolving arms and leaves it in long windrows, great bundles ready rolled for the hay loader. The hay loader is a wood and steel implement that works on an endless chain principle. It is attached to the end of the hay wagon with its big rack, and is drawn either by horse power or by tractor. The man who loads must work quickly, for the hay loader lifts the hay from the windrows on to the rack without interruption.

Both these haying tools, like the hay fork, save time and man power. But I preferred by far the more leisurely haying on the Lake Farm. It was so much more old-timey and picturesque to see the men pitching hay on to the rack, chaffing each other, and all the rest of it. I said as much to the Doctor. "Told you you belonged to the Middle Ages," he retorted.

It was a corn year. There was sufficient moisture, and the August sun was hot. Dr. Wheeler, the soil expert, when he came for the second time to Big

Oak Farm, and brought Mrs. Wheeler with him, said that he had never seen finer corn, even in the Kansas corn belt. There was a big corn field beyond the old orchard. I sat under the wide-spreading branches of a Northern Spy tree and watched that great field of corn for hours at a time, wondering at its dim, green aloofness, its strange rustling and murmuring, the living, swaying grace of it.

Days grew into months, and summer passed. The wind was cold at night. There were Northern lights and brilliant stars. The vines on the Stone House were wreathed about and over the lower windows. They were fruited with charming, dull-purple berries. Underneath the vivid green leaves there was a shimmer of dim copper. Apples on the old trees showed fast-brightening tints of red and gold. Our grain was cut and stacked. Our corn had tasseled out, was in the milk, about ready to harvest. Millet carried its woolly brown heads erect on its strong green stalks. Squirrels and chipmunks were busily gathering their winter stores. They worked with the accompaniment of much chatter. Outer hulls of hickory, or walnuts as we Vermonters call them, and of butternuts were showing signs of bursting. The radiant air was filled with gold and silver mist. The color in the marsh was beautiful, a riot of bright, soft reds, browns, and yellows, with a sky of amber and cobalt.

Each day flocks of birds gathered, drifted, fled. Black duck and teal fed in the wild rice of the creeks

and marshes. Muskrats swam about in the reeds, looking for likely places to build their winter homes. The days were noticeably shorter. There was moonlight in the east before the after-glow of sunset faded in the west. Cosmos and chrysanthemum were abloom in my garden. The silver birch among the evergreens of our rose garden had leaves of purest gold. Blue aster and goldenrod starred the roadsides. It was autumn.

In our hill-enclosed pastures brood mares with suckling colts at foot grazed happily. It was the time of County Fairs and Grange Meetings. Poltron brought home his blue ribbons. At the races, Madge Wildfire won laurels again and again. "Pure joy," said the man of dreams.

Yes, autumn had come. The stress of the farm year was ended. Autumn, and we were at home. New York with its restless clamor was of another world.

"Want to come and watch us threshing?" the Doctor asked one morning, when our wood fire was a grateful breakfast accompaniment. We rode to the big barn by the Slang Bridge where the new thresher had been set up. The tractor was used for power. The thresher is a fascinating machine to watch. It brings into related activity so many different operations. Teams drive up with great loads of golden grain in bundles tied by the reaper and binder. They drive close to the platform, on which stands a man who feeds the hungry maw of the

thresher with the precious bundles, just as fast as he can handle them. The men on the teams toss the bundles down to him. The machine cuts open the bundles, separates the heads of the grain from the stalks, and the kernels from the hulls.

On one side of the thresher a man hangs up grain bags into which the grain pours in a continuous stream. He has barely time to tie up the bags, shove them aside to be loaded and carried by team to the granary, before the next two bags are filled. The hulls, chaff and weeds come out on the opposite side. A river of bright yellow straw flows out over the end of the thresher on an ever-moving canvas path. At this end two men make a great stack of the straw. Dust and chaff flies about and envelops men and machines, horses and wagons in dim clouds. It all goes like a house afire, machinery rattling, tractor puffing, wagons creaking. One gets the impression of splendid co-operation and efficiency of men and of tools. It must go in unison, each operation must dove-tail accurately with the next, or the entire threshing is tied up. When this happens everyone breathes deep with relief, takes a long look around, a new chew of tobacco, and then begins to swear at whatever has gone wrong with tractor or belt, with chains or suction pipe. At the end of the afternoon, our maids drive down to see the threshing and to bring a cold drink for the workers.

While they were still threshing in the big barn, I saw another interesting tool at work on the South

Farm. The corn harvester is a heavy implement drawn by three horses. It works on the same principle as a grain reaper and binder. It mows the corn in even swathes, makes it into huge bundles, ties them up, cuts the twine, and drops the bundles, all automatically. I hated to see the splendid, upstanding corn ignominiously felled to earth. It has not long to wait before silo-filling. Corn, in order to keep its nutritive quality, must be shredded and put into the silo before it loses its juicy freshness.

Two days later, silo-filling began. Silos are queer structures. They look for all the world like huge hollow pipes set on end and weighted to earth with concrete. Teams bring up the great green bundles of corn. They are fed into the shredding machine. Not a morsel of the entire plant is wasted, from tassel to stalk. It is all cut up, and literally blown through a succession of pipes into the silo.

Inside the structure a man keeps the constant stream of shredded corn evenly distributed, and treads it down. There must be no air spaces, else fermentation will set in too early, and the ensilage will deteriorate. The freshly-shredded corn has a pungent, aromatic smell, to which fermentation later adds a winey touch. Cattle thrive on ensilage corn, which is fed to them once or twice per day, besides their clover hay. Only the milkers are grained in addition. After a wait of ten days to two weeks, when the ensilage in the silo has settled, the silos

Looking Northwest from the Balustrade at Sunset.

were refilled. The remaining corn was set up in stooks like the field corn, to dry in the open. With this done, the stress of harvest time was ended. The day laborers could be dismissed. Fall ploughing was begun on both farms.

One night, we had our first heavy frost, and lo, the ampelopsis was aflame. In their leafy coverts, Spys and Baldwins glowed like Japanese lanterns. Maples and beeches hung out streamers of vivid scarlet and Etruscan gold. It was the

> "Season of mellow fruitfulness,
> Close bosom friend of the maturing sun."

The days were filled with glorious sun and sky and wind and color. The nights were made of magic stars and moon and mist and shadow.

We were alone on Hallowe'en, a night that sang of harvest and fulfillment. The hunters' moon was at its full, and wrapped our world in luminous veils of peace and silence. The balustrade was bright silver, tarnished in places with shadows of the Stone House. Golden-crowned elms and birches glowed palely. "Honey pale," like Theocritus' shepherdess, they seemed, among the velvet black of pines and cedars. There was no sound but a screech owl's strange, fateful voice at intervals, a voice we both loved; mystic rhythms that ask the age-old question, that seek the eternal answer to the riddle of the Sphinx, which is life.

It was a night for dreams. Our dreams had

come true. The seeds we had found in Walter Clark's studio so long, long ago, had grown their wings. They were full-fledged, winged seeds, seeds of victory.